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LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
THOMAS JEFFERSON



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Painted by G. Stuart

Th Jefferson

LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
THOMAS JEFFERSON

BY  
FRANCIS W. HIRST

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## PREFATORY NOTE

On taking leave of my proofs I recall with gratitude generous assistance from many quarters in America. I would particularly mention my friend Charles C. Burlingham of New York, who first introduced me to American politics and American hospitality. Nor can I forget the obligations I am under to Mr. John Stewart Bryan and Mr. F. W. Scott of Richmond, Virginia, or to Dr. Lyon G. Tyler, Dr. Edwin Alderman and Dr. J. A. C. Chandler, who all abound in Jeffersonian lore. During most of the time I have had the aid of a most efficient secretary, Miss Lucy Wilcox, now Mrs. W. F. Adams. To my wife, and to my sister Gertrude M. Hirst of Barnard College, Columbia University, I owe constant help and encouragement.



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## Introduction

that no one — not even a Peel, a Cobden, or a Gladstone — did more to graft these fruitful aims and golden rules of administration upon a new Democracy.

It were unprofitable and ungracious to weigh Jefferson's services to mankind and to America against those of Washington or Lincoln. Nor can their characters and talents be compared, though each owes his renown in large measure to a happy union of Patience, Perseverance and Fortitude. To the student of political philosophy Jefferson is the most interesting of all American statesmen, because he combined with a marvellous insight into the springs of human nature, and into the motives that sway individuals or masses, an extensive knowledge of political science and history. He was a theorist, a doctrinaire, an idealist, but always at school with experience. If the charge that he was too ambitious be true — and without a spice of ambition how few men of genius would be found to climb the slippery ladder of politics? — then nothing in his career is more astonishing than his constant loyalty to causes, which at times seemed lost, and to a form of religion which exposed him to the fury and intolerant fanaticism of orthodoxy at moments when political prudence would have counselled, if not conformity with received opinion, at least a quiet and unobtrusive reticence. But his convictions on moral and religious questions were so deeply entrenched, and were supported by a moral courage so proud and indomitable, that he preferred obloquy to compromise. His tenacity was equally marked in private and public life. It was observed of him that he never abandoned a plan, a principle or a friend. Of his extraordinary versatility — his scientific attainments, his wide scholarship and learning, his skill in mechanics and architecture, his almost universal curiosity — we shall find many

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illustrations. And with this rare assemblage of qualities and talents were blended a passionate love of home and family and a genius for friendship, which make him one of the most lovable characters among modern statesmen.

It remains to explain why I have attempted to draw his portrait and paint anew the scenes and scenery of his life.

For some reason, not easy to understand, no Englishman has ever written a biography of Jefferson. Yet Great Britain has at least a share in him. He was of British stock — without a drop, so far as we know, of foreign blood in his veins. He was born and bred a British citizen, and remained one for 33 years. But for George the Third there is no reason to suppose that Thomas Jefferson would ever have had cause to change his allegiance.

The qualities of Washington, Jefferson and John Adams were truly English; their stubborn love of liberty and independence had been transplanted from England; they were inspired by the same principles which had been asserted by Pym and Hampden and were to be reasserted by the Reformers of 1832. Jefferson's theories of law and government were derived, as we shall see, not from Rousseau or any French source but from Coke and Algernon Sydney and John Locke.

My own interest in Jefferson goes back to the second Hague Conference, when Lord Chancellor Loreburn asked me to trace out for him the history of sea law in time of war. I then discovered how Jefferson helped Benjamin Franklin to negotiate the first Treaty which embodied the doctrine of Freedom of the Seas and protected peaceful commerce from capture or destruction by naval captains and privateers.

But it was a visit to Virginia in 1921, when I saw Monticello and Williamsburg and the University of Virginia, and



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came in contact with the oral tradition, which still speaks of 'Mr Jefferson' as if he were alive, that prompted me to undertake a new study of his life and writings. I found ample material. The first important *Life of Jefferson* (in two volumes, 1836) was written by George Tucker with the familiar knowledge and discriminating sympathy of a philosopher friend. It is dedicated to James Madison, who had read the proof sheets in the last year of his life. That of Henry S. Randall in three volumes (1858), covering some two thousand pages, constitutes the official biography. Painstaking, accurate, zealous, untiring in the pursuit of facts or the investigation of error, Randall supplied, with the assistance of Jefferson's family, not only a narrative of his hero's life but a valuable commentary on the characters and doings of his political contemporaries. But the generation for which Randall wrote has passed away. Sentiment and taste in letters as well as in politics have changed. His style, always copious, often redundant, and sometimes turgid, is an obstacle to the modern reader. His digressions are too frequent and not always too relevant. His footnotes and appendices are of longitude immense; and the ordinary reader is as likely to reach the last chapter of Randall's *Jefferson* as the last book of Spenser's *Faerie Queen*. Parton's *Life* is less verbose and more readable, but also less accurate than its predecessors. Written for the American public more than half a century ago it presents us with a lively but in some respects obsolete rendering of Jefferson's character and career. From a perusal of some later productions I am led to suppose that, when a dyspeptic author has a grudge against Jefferson, he relieves his feelings by writing a *Life*. But the latest of them, by Professor David Muzzey, is a marked exception. It is a masterly historical study, which

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places the figure of Jefferson in fair perspective. In recording my obligations I may add that I have drawn mainly on Jefferson's own writings and letters — a vast storehouse — for the elucidation of his life and opinions. The Memorial Edition, the largest and latest collection, in twenty volumes, supplies a quantity of material which was not available to Randall and has hardly been used at all since it appeared in 1907. Unfortunately its arrangement is clumsy and even chaotic, and the text is defaced by errors of all descriptions, contrasting in this respect with the scholarly accuracy of Ford's edition.

On returning from America I consulted the late Lord Morley, for whom, in preparation for his *Life of Gladstone*, I had sifted the archives at Hawarden Castle and at the same time learnt, I hope, something of the art of biography. He expressed a keen interest in my project, and gave me very practical encouragement by recommending the book in advance to his friend Sir Frederick Macmillan.

It is my hope that this new presentation will serve to correct some misapprehensions of Jefferson which are still current in popular histories, educational primers, and even in such monographs as Dr Eckenrode's recent account of the Revolution in Virginia. By English writers Jefferson has been strangely neglected. Yet, apart from the originality of his contributions to political and economic ideas, his sway over American Democracy is unquestioned. No one can understand the currents and cross currents of public life in the United States, or the constitutional controversies which have agitated parties since the Union, if he ignores Jefferson. For such an ascendancy there is no parallel in English politics. To match Jefferson you would have to roll Bentham, Cobden and Gladstone into one. An American professor of history — not a Jeffersonian —

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once said to me that Jefferson influenced American opinion more than all the other Presidents put together.

It is perhaps unfortunate for Jefferson that he was pitted against Alexander Hamilton; for some of Hamilton's admirers on both sides of the Atlantic seem to think that their idolatry is incomplete until they have mauled and mangled his chief adversary. For Englishmen almost the only modern portrait of Jefferson has been furnished in this way by Mr F. S. Oliver to embellish his well known essay on Alexander Hamilton. From this caricature, or travesty, I have had the curiosity to pick out a few gems by way of example and warning. It is indeed a queer assortment of contradictory epithets, an impossible mosaic of black and white. In one place Jefferson appears as 'a citizen who served his country with ungrudging labour for close on half a century', and as 'one of the most remarkable figures in history'. Elsewhere he is described as the 'last of the giants'; but then we are distressed to learn that our giant's statesmanship was 'singularly barren', and that his actual achievement was almost 'negligible'. In another passage Mr Oliver finds it hard not to rate the last of the giants as 'a mere mountebank, whose title to fame consists not in the value of his work but in the skill with which he imposed upon his own day and generation'. After this comes the surprising intelligence that Jefferson was absolutely sincere in his belief in the common people and in their capacity for self government. These beliefs and opinions, we are told, were 'more to him than religion', and he was 'haunted by a sense of duty' which compelled him to safe guard them; yet these same beliefs and opinions 'never at any point touched a firm bottom but merely swam like a kind of "sud" upon the stream of expediency'.

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On looking at the portraits of Jefferson Mr Oliver found in all of them dignity and most of them kindliness. Nevertheless Jefferson is described elsewhere as 'cruel', and as one who while professing philanthropy, was 'vindictive and at times ferocious'. When his opinions proved to be unpopular 'he was at considerable pains to conceal them from his countrymen'. Often he is depicted as a hypocrite, a dupe, a half-conscious impostor, or a mere demagogue whose one consuming ambition is to attain power by gaining popular favour. We are even asked to believe that 'he hated minorities, and hated even more to be in a minority'. Yet in one of these purple patches his success is attributed to a sincere and quixotic pursuit of ideals!

If Jefferson is 'a kind of Don Quixote', he is a very peculiar variety of the species; for he is portrayed as 'unchivalrous', as, 'a shrinking antagonist', who 'never fought in the open when he could avoid it', as 'absolutely without candour, and as one who held no opinion so firmly that he would risk unpopularity to achieve it'.

Yet as a statesman he had some good qualities, or qualities which in a good man might have been serviceable to the public. For example 'he made no attempt at bribery. He did not offer doles, and never hinted at spoliation. There was no grossness in his methods'. He believed in humanity; 'his love of the masses was sincere, and his faith in them was constant'. All through the revolutionary epoch 'his sympathy never wavered, his hope never failed'. But a page or two after this eulogium it appears that his one sincere belief was that the voice of the people is the voice of God, and his one ambition 'to keep himself poised at the top of the wave'.

That a man who has to be represented throughout the essay as naturally destitute not only of moral but of

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physical courage, should have been a bold horseman is a little puzzling. But Mr Oliver has no doubt that in every other sphere, and in all his dealings with men as distinct from horses, Jefferson was 'timorous and unready'. In controversy he is painted by this amiable writer as 'never taking blows without a whine'.

On the intellectual side, we read, 'no statesman has excelled him, and very few in the whole history of the world have equalled Jefferson in observation'; yet (after a gap of seventy pages) we are informed that, with altogether exceptional opportunities for observation of the beginnings of the French Revolution he saw nothing; the profound movements 'were concealed from his gaze'. Whether Jefferson was naturally a liar is not quite clear to Mr Oliver; but a timid disposition—so we are informed—'led him constantly into situations from which he chose to escape by some mean device, or on some disingenuous plea, or even by plain untruth'. Being 'absolutely without candour' and a 'worshipper of words', a sophist who detested reason and a 'weaver of fanciful philosophies', no Oliverian can be surprised that Jefferson 'in the end died as he had lived in the odour of phrases'.

One might go on multiplying incongruities. The vocabulary of malevolence seems to be inexhaustible. But the book has had so wide a circulation that I could not refrain from noticing it; and if the quotations are not in themselves their own sufficient condemnation, I shall trust that, whatever else my own book may achieve, it will at least relegate Mr Oliver's account of Jefferson to the realm of fiction.

LIFE AND LETTERS  
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THOMAS JEFFERSON



# LIFE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

## BOOK I

### CHAPTER I

#### COLONIAL VIRGINIA AND JEFFERSON'S BOYHOOD

"Consider likewise what commodities the soil where the Plantation is doth naturally yield, that they may someway help to defray the charge of the plantation, as it hath fared with tobacco in Virginia."

— BACON (1625)

IF an Englishman, seeking good society in an agreeable climate, and wishing to gratify a taste for history, romance, and natural scenery, not without sport by land and water, were offered a year's residence in any one of the forty-eight states which compose the American Union, his choice would very likely fall on Virginia.

Virginia was the first planted of all the English colonies in North America. Projected by Sir Walter Raleigh and named by the Virgin Queen, its origins recall a golden age of poetry and adventure — the spacious days of great Elizabeth — when Shakespeare was an English playwright, Bacon an English lawyer, and Drake an English sea captain. The first Virginian settlers, led by the valiant Captain John Smith, and financed by a London Company, could remember England in the glorious year of 1588,

"When that great fleet invincible against her bore in vain  
The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of Spain."



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In Colonial antiquities and historic associations Virginia's only rivals are the New England States. The Old Dominion had become flourishing and fractious, while New York was still a Dutch village, and before Philadelphia was laid out or even planned. The names of Patrick Henry and Washington, of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Marshall and the Lees, furnish enough of civic worth and military renown to adorn any roll of fame.

Jamestown, the first English settlement, or rather the first to survive, in North America was planted in 1607 on a low peninsula of the James river. For several years the little colony struggled with misfortune; and but for its patron saints Captain John Smith, the Princess Pocahontas, and King Tobacco, it must have perished. Like the early Christians, these Jamestown settlers tried to live without private property. The lands they tilled were owned in common, and their gains in trade with the Indians were put into a common pool. The experiment was not a success. In 1610 the plantation had dwindled from a few hundred to sixty, and the remnant was preparing to return home, when new settlers and supplies arrived from England. Soon the tide of prosperity began to flow. The Communist system was abolished, and with the institution of private property and competition industry found its natural incentives. But it was the cultivation of tobacco that brought wealth to the infant settlement, and made Virginia at the time of Jefferson's birth the richest and most prosperous of Britain's North American colonies.

The credit or discredit of discovering the tobacco plant, together with the invention of the art of smoking, belongs to the American Indians. Long before the arrival of the Spaniards they had domesticated the plant, and had learned how to dry the leaves. They had also invented





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the pipe, of which they possessed many varieties. Some had bowls of clay, others of stone with long and curiously carved stems. The luxurious Aztecs not only smoked pipes and cigars but took snuff.

The first mention of tobacco and of smoking in European history is a note in the diary of Columbus for the year 1492. Soon afterwards the Spaniards brought the fragrant weed to Europe. By the end of the sixteenth century Englishmen had contracted the habit, and from a habit smoking soon became a mania. At first the government adopted repressive measures, but desisted on discovering that an easy and growing revenue could be derived from the customs duties on tobacco.

The first Virginian settlers found that the plant, which had been brought from the South, was being grown by the Indians in patches near their wigwams. To the red man smoking was more than a pleasure; it was often a duty and sometimes a rite. The pipe was a symbol of charity and good will. The best of pipes, the calumet, was the pipe of peace. Captain John Smith, on his first visit to the Rappahannocks, was met by four chiefs carrying a bow with arrows and a pipe, signifying that he might take his choice between war and peace. John Rolfe, one of Smith's companions and husband of Pocahontas, started a tobacco patch of his own in 1612. The example spread; for the soil and climate were favourable, and a hogshead of tobacco soon proved to be the most valuable of exports. In a few years the Plantation was a Plantation of tobacco planters. The settlers quickly improved on Indian methods, and Virginian tobacco became renowned.

King James the First, who had been induced by hope of a gold mine — in which he would have a share — to

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grant the Colony a charter, was much disgusted when the ships began to bring back from Jamestown tobacco instead of gold. He issued a *Counterblast*, likening the smoke of nicotine to the "Stygian fumes of the pit which is bottomless." But the tobacco trade was to prove more lucrative to the King's revenue than any gold mine, and the nicotine plant did more for the development of Virginia than gold for California. The new industry expanded at a rate which reminds us of the rubber plantations in Malaya and the rubber boom of our own days. In 1620 Virginia shipped 40,000 pounds of tobacco to England; in 1628 it appears the export had reached 500,000 pounds; and it went on advancing for more than a century until in 1745, when Thomas Jefferson was two years old, it had risen to 38,000,000 pounds.

Many of the plantations were very large, and had their own wharves on the nearest tidewater, at which English ships landed their freight and loaded their cargoes for the return voyage. The management of these plantations and of the trade with England required a good deal of skill; indeed the tact, courtesy, and administrative ability which distinguished so many leading Virginians in the eighteenth century, and produced the so-called Virginian Dynasty of Presidents, may perhaps have been inherited from the organizers of the tobacco industry.

Through causes which have not been sufficiently explained, the British Colonies of North America, though they practised self-government under their charters with considerable success, were unable or unwilling to establish and maintain satisfactory currencies. Many scandalous measures of repudiation at various times by the various legislatures resulted from excessive issues of paper money. Virginia was comparatively fortunate; for very early in

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the history of the Colony tobacco came to be the recognized medium of exchange and standard of value. A pound weight of tobacco was the unit in which labour, salaries, and taxes were paid. Even the English maidens, brought over in the early days of the Colony to marry its bachelors, were paid for in tobacco. One writer, forgetting the history of Colonial paper moneys and of the Continental currency, which during the Revolutionary War became a byword for worthlessness, has deplored the instability of tobacco money. Occasionally, it is true, as a result of an unusually heavy crop, the price fell to a penny or even a halfpenny per pound; but for long periods the price was fairly stable at about threepence. And tobacco had one supreme advantage over paper money; it possessed an intrinsic value. It never fell or could fall to nothing, like a continental paper dollar, unless or until men ceased to smoke. We shall see later how bitterly the clergymen of the Established Church of Virginia resented a law which compelled them to take their salaries in the depreciated paper currency of the Colony instead of in tobacco.

Virginian tobacco could only be shipped to Britain, and the monopoly caused some sharp contests between the Virginia Assembly and the government at home. Indeed a Virginian patriot, contemplating these incidents, once went so far as to declare that "a true history of tobacco would be the history of English and American liberty."

In the first half of the eighteenth century Virginia was one of the happiest communities of white men in the world. It was as a rule very loyal as well as very prosperous. A royal governor presided over a nominated council, resembling the House of Lords, and an elected House of Burgesses as jealous of its rights as the House of Com-

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mons. This popular body had been established in 1619, when the Virginians, meeting in the church at Jamestown, elected twenty-two of their number, and thus formed the first legislative assembly of the English race in the New World. One of these Burgesses (from Flower de Hundred) bore the name of Jefferson. The Burgesses, though sometimes unruly, were usually controlled by the rich planters, who formed a Virginian aristocracy. They resembled in their tastes and habits, their politics and their love of the chase, the country squires of England from whom some of them were descended. They were gay, hospitable, fond of display, drove coaches and six, raced, danced, drank, fiddled, and gambled, administered the law as county justices, and attended church with as much zeal and regularity as their brethren in England.

At its best slavery is an abominable institution. But it is not always and everywhere wholly evil. In Virginia, as in Greece, it gave leisure to the planter class; and some of them used this leisure well. They took to politics and law; they administered paternal justice honestly and cheaply. Some sent their sons to Oxford, many to William and Mary College at Williamsburg. A few, like the Byrds of Westover, collected libraries. Fiddles were as plentiful as pianos or gramophones among their descendants to-day. Life in Old Virginia went very merrily. Comfort was widely diffused. Hospitality was the universal rule. Beggars were almost unknown. Goldsmith would have played and danced his way luxuriously through the Old Dominion. No door would have been closed to him there. The tone of Virginian society, and the life of the people, differed as widely from the puritanism of New England, as England under Charles the Second differed from England under the Long Parliament.

## Colonial Virginia and Jefferson's Boyhood

Virginia was a diocese of London, and conformity to the established religion was as strictly enforced in the colony as in the old country. But its parsons did little to educate their flocks. In 1723 the Bishop of London, evincing a sudden curiosity in these distant parishes of his diocese, addressed a series of questions to the Virginian parsons. One was: "Are there any schools in your parish?" All except three replied, "None." To another question "Is there any parish library?" only one could answer in the affirmative, and his reply was: "We have the *Book of Homilies*, *The Whole Duty of Man*, and the *Singing Psalms*." Possibly the Bishop's catechism did good; for thirty years later, when Thomas Jefferson was ready to go to school, several clergymen were receiving boarders, and some few schools, it appears, had been established in the more densely populated counties.

It must not be supposed that Virginia at the time our story opens was a Royalist club, or that Passive Obedience was its political creed. The leading tobacco planters have been called Cavaliers by some writers on Colonial America, in contrast with the Presbyterians, Independents, and Quakers of New England and Pennsylvania. But the Virginian gentry of the eighteenth century were not Jacobites. If the fathers had rejoiced in the Restoration, most of their sons had welcomed the Glorious Revolution. Forsaking malarious Jamestown, they had named their new capital Williamsburg and their college "William and Mary." When the Hanoverian line was established, they felt that the Protestant cause was safe, and that under a limited monarchy colonial charters and liberties would be secure. The advent of George the Third upset their calculations.



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By the middle of the eighteenth century Colonial Virginia, "The Old Dominion" as it was often called, consisted of two parts. The tidewater country, comprising the whole coast and marshy lowlands, was separated by the Blue Ridge and other ranges of hills from the upland western half of Virginia, which became known as the "Piedmont country." The colony had celebrated its hundredth birthday before the tidewater country was fully occupied; and up to the year 1710 no white settlers had passed the Blue Ridge. Then the movement westward began. Pioneers pushed up the James river above the falls. Goochland, soon to become Albemarle county, was set off in 1728. In 1775, the last complete year of its Colonial history, one-third of Virginia's citizens lived beyond the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies, and her adventurous frontiersmen had pushed on through Kentucky and Illinois. All through this period the House of Burgesses was growing in numbers, strength, and influence. If the gentlemen planters were mostly conservative Whigs rather than reactionary Tories, the smaller planters and yeomen, especially those of the pioneer class, displayed at times a spirit of independence which brought on differences with the governor. They were often Non-conformists — chiefly Presbyterians from Ulster — who were beginning to emigrate in rather large numbers. These Scotch-Irish, as they are still called, did not mix well with Anglicans; they were thorns in the side of the Established Church and its not-over-competent parsons.

In one of the most beautiful and salubrious parts of this frontier region Thomas Jefferson was born on April 13, 1743. His father's farmhouse, Shadwell, was finely situated on the north bank of the Rivanna, a little above its junction with the James river. On the north and west the land-

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scape is bounded by scattered hills and mountains. Through a gap in the southwest range, whence the Rivanna issues, can be seen the sharp outlines of the Ragged Mountains. Charlottesville, then a tiny village, is four and a half miles from Shadwell. A mile and a half on the other side of the river rises abruptly from the valley a wooded hill, from which in Mediæval Europe a robber baron's castle might have frowned. This is Monticello, Jefferson's beloved "little mountain," whereon he afterwards built a house, one of the most picturesque and famous relics of Colonial days, a Mecca of the liberal faith, to which many a pious pilgrim wends his way. If the view from Shadwell is extensive, it is not to be compared with the panorama of valleys, plains, hills, and mountains which rewards the pedestrian from Charlottesville, when, after a dusty walk and a short but stiff climb, he attains the summit of Monticello.

Here, surrounded by grandchildren and great grandchildren, the patriarch Thomas Jefferson sat down on January 6, 1821 "To make some memoranda and state some recollections of facts and dates" concerning himself. In his first pages the Autobiography carries us rapidly through his family history to his first school.

The tradition in my father's family was, that their ancestor came to this country from Wales, and from near the mountain of Snowdon, the highest in Great Britain. I noted once a case from Wales, in the law reports, where a person of our name was either plaintiff or defendant; and one of the same name was secretary to the Virginia Company. These are the only instances in which I have met with the name in that country. I have found it in our early records; but the first particular information I have of any ancestor was of my grandfather, who lived at the place in Chesterfield called Osborne's, and owned the lands afterwards the glebe of the parish. He had three sons; Thomas, who died young, Field, who settled on the waters of Roanoke, and left numerous

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descendants, and Peter, my father, who settled on the lands I still own, called Shadwell, adjoining my present residence. He was born February 29, 1707-8, and intermarried 1739, with Jane Randolph, of the age of nineteen, daughter of Isham Randolph, one of the seven sons of that name and family settled at Dungeoness in Goochland. They trace their pedigree far back in England and Scotland, to which let everyone ascribe the faith and merit he chooses.

My father's education had been quite neglected; but being of a strong mind, sound judgment, and eager after information, he read much and improved himself, insomuch that he was chosen, with Joshua Fry, professor of Mathematics in William and Mary college, to continue the boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina, which had been begun by Colonel Byrd; and was afterwards employed with the same Mr. Fry, to make the first map of Virginia which had ever been made, that of Captain Smith being merely a conjectural sketch. . . . He was the third or fourth settler, about the year 1737, of the part of the country in which I live. He died August 17, 1757, leaving my mother a widow, who lived till 1776, with six daughters and two sons, myself the elder. To my younger brother he left his estate on James river, called Snowdon, after the supposed birth place of the family: to myself, the lands on which I was born and live. He placed me at the English school at five years of age; and at the Latin at nine, where I continued until his death.

We all feel a legitimate curiosity in the pedigrees of great men, and fortunately Jefferson's brief account can be amplified. Not many will have the time and patience to plod through the three large volumes in which Henry Randall, most painstaking and copious of official biographers, presents the complete life of his hero.<sup>1</sup> But from Randall's pages and from a charming book by Jefferson's great granddaughter, Sarah N. Randolph,<sup>2</sup> some details may be gathered which help us to understand how this

<sup>1</sup> It was undertaken, as announced at the time, "with the approbation of the family, with an unreserved access to the use of all private papers in their possession, and at every step was aided by their recollections and opinions."

<sup>2</sup> *The Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson*, compiled from family letters and reminiscences, New York, 1871.

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particular boy, born on the Indian frontier of Virginia, came to be prophet of democracy, leader of Republicanism, and ruler of the United States.

As yet no recipe has been found for the production of human genius, though the discoveries of Mendel and his disciples in the crossing of plants and animals have gone far to fortify our belief that qualities as well as features are transmitted from parents to children. Unusual talents, it has been remarked, sometimes spring from a union between an old family, which has enjoyed leisure, wealth, and culture for generations, and a more robust individual, who has fought his way upwards by hard work and enterprise. From such a marriage came Thomas Jefferson. In him the sensitive pride and refinement of the Randolphs were united with the physical strength, the inexhaustible energy of mind, and the capacity for making friendships and improving opportunities which accounted for the rise of his father.

—The Jeffersons were among the first settlers in Virginia. The name, as we have already noted, appears among the Burgesses convened by Governor Yeardley at Jamestown in July, 1619. Jefferson's father, Peter, was famed for herculean strength. A hogshead of tobacco weighed a thousand pounds. Standing between two hogsheads, Peter could "head" them both up at once, a performance beyond the power of two ordinary labourers. With strength went endurance, enterprise, skill, and courage, qualities which found full scope on the frontier. Like George Washington he began as a land surveyor, the most attractive of all civil employments to adventurous spirits in a prosperous and expanding colony, and won his way into the best Virginian society. Among the leading families at that time, the Randolphs, in whose veins ran the

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royal blood of the Princess Pocahontas, were perhaps the richest, the proudest, and the most influential. They came of good stock; their forefathers, squires of Warwickshire and Northamptonshire, were allied with the great Scottish Earls of Murray. One of them, Thomas Randolph, an Elizabethan poet and wit, had the honour of being "adopted" by Ben Jonson. This Thomas was great uncle of William, a cavalier who emigrated to Virginia about the year 1660, prospered greatly, and married Catherine Isham. Isham Randolph, Thomas Jefferson's maternal grandfather, was one of their children.

At twenty-five or thereabouts Peter Jefferson became bosom friend of William Randolph, the young lord of Tuckahoe. Next he sought and won the hand of William's cousin, Jane, eldest daughter of Isham Randolph, opulent proprietor of Dungeness and at that time Adjutant General of Virginia. Isham had a taste for botany which descended to his grandson, and corresponded on the subject with two Quaker botanists of that time — Peter Collinson in London, and William Bartram of Philadelphia. A quaint letter has been preserved from Collinson to Bartram advising the latter, who was planning a botanical tour in Virginia, to visit Isham, but before starting, to provide himself with a suit of fine clothes. For, said he, "these Virginians are a very gentle and well dressed people, and look perhaps more at a man's outside than his inside." The good Quaker visited Isham at his grand mansion on the James river, where he was hospitably entertained by the proprietor and a staff of about one hundred slaves.

Virginia's best tobacco lands were becoming exhausted before the middle of the eighteenth century, and the Piedmont country, well timbered and suitable for wheat or maize, was being developed. As tobacco profits dimin-

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ished the old planters maintained their style by mortgaging their estates. And so it happened that there was plenty of work for surveyors and lawyers during the last half century of Virginia's Colonial history, while Peter Jefferson was making a fortune and his eldest son a reputation.

In his boyhood Thomas Jefferson must have seen something of his father's professional work as a land surveyor on the frontier, and he afterwards gave a careful description of land settlement in his *Notes on Virginia*. At first, he tells us, the mode of acquiring lands was by petition to the General Assembly. "If the lands prayed for were already clear of Indian title, and the Assembly thought the prayer reasonable, they passed the property by their vote to the petitioner. But if they had not yet been ceded by the Indians, it was necessary that the petitioner should previously purchase their right." As the Colony increased, and individual applications for land multiplied, the General Assembly established general rules to regulate all grants of land, leaving their administration to the Governor. Thus arose what were usually called the Land Laws of Virginia. Under these the Crown made general purchases of lands from the Indians, and the Governor assigned them to suitable applicants in accordance with the rules made by the Legislature.

This process of acquiring new lands was known as "patenting." It was the first object of a successful Virginian to enroll himself in the landowning class; for there, as in the old country, an estate or plantation was almost indispensable to social and political status. So in 1735 Peter Jefferson, making ready to marry a Randolph and found a family, "patented" a thousand acres on the frontier at the eastern opening of the mountain group through

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which the Rivanna flows. The river intersected his estate, and most of it lay in the valley; but it spread also to the foothills and embraced the whole of the steep wooded hill which his son was to name Monticello.

At the same time his friend, William Randolph, "patented" an adjoining tract of 2,400 acres on the east, 400 acres of which he soon afterwards transferred to Peter Jefferson, not for cash, but, as the deed shows, for "Henry Weatherbourne's biggest bowl of arrack punch"—a transaction which witnesses alike to the conviviality and the affection of the two friends. On the land thus added to his original patent, Peter Jefferson found a suitable site, and built the "plain weather-boarded house" to which in 1738 he took his bride Jane Randolph.

Isham's daughter and Peter's wife had been born in the parish of Shadwell in London, when her parents were on a visit to the old country; so in her honour Peter Jefferson called his farm Shadwell. The adjoining estate of William Randolph was named Edgehill, after the field on which some of his cavalier ancestors had fought for Royalty. Colonel William Randolph of Tuckahoe and Edgehill died in 1745. His last request was that Peter Jefferson should take care of his estates and be guardian to his son, Thomas Mann Randolph. Peter accordingly removed with his wife and family to Tuckahoe and remained there seven years. Thomas was then only two years old; but he just remembered being handed up to a servant on horseback and carried for a long distance on a pillow. The Jefferson family returned to Shadwell in 1752.

At Shadwell all manly sports were encouraged. An ardent hunter and naturalist, the boy spent many happy days in pursuit of game along the southwest mountains.

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He excelled in swimming, and soon became one of the boldest riders in Virginia. By his father young Jefferson was taught that "it is the strong in body who are both the strong and the free in mind." In this school too he learned self-reliance; for another favourite maxim of his father's (rarely honoured in a slave state) was: "Never ask another to do what you can do yourself."

Peter Jefferson was not one of those self-made men who despise books and learning. His library included Shakespeare, Swift, the Spectator, and the works of Doddridge, which the good low churchman and Whig esteemed "more precious than gold." He meant his eldest boy to be a scholar, and left instructions for his education. Before his death in 1757 Peter had assumed the leadership in Albemarle, one of the new Piedmont counties. He was one of its three justices, county surveyor, and member of the House of Burgesses. As County Colonel he was responsible for the Indian frontier, a post of some anxiety after Braddock's defeat in 1755. Fortunately for the people of Albemarle, he knew how to keep the peace by treating the Red men with kindness and hospitality. As Shadwell lay near the Indian trail, now becoming a public highway, the farm was a favourite stopping place for friendly chiefs on their way to Williamsburg, the Colonial capital, which lay a hundred and fifty miles away.

In 1812 Thomas Jefferson and John Adams exchanged reminiscences about the Red Indians. They are a people, wrote Jefferson, "with whom in the early part of my life I was very familiar":—

"At that time I acquired impressions of attachment and commiseration for them which have never been obliterated. Before the Revolution they were in the habit of coming often, and in great numbers, to



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the seat of government where I was often with them. I knew much of the great Ontassetè, the warrior and orator of the Cherokees. He was always the guest of my father on his journeys to and from Williamsburg. I was in his camp when he made his great farewell oration to his people the evening before he departed for England. The moon was in full splendour, and to her he seemed to address himself in his prayers for his own safety on the voyage and that of his people during his absence. His sounding voice, distinct articulation, animated action, and the solemn silence of his people at their several fires, filled me with awe and veneration, although I did not understand a word he uttered."

All through life Jefferson maintained a keen interest in the Indian tribes of North America, diligently collecting information about their languages, customs, character, origins, and traditions. He did more than any other American statesman of that time to protect and save them from extinction. In his opinion the Red Indian was superior to the negro and equal to an uncivilised European in intellect, morals, and physique.

On this wild and beautiful frontier, encouraged by his father to ride and shoot, Thomas Jefferson learned to love nature and the solitude of the forest. His observations of wild animals were recorded with scientific exactitude. The famous *Notes on Virginia*, written in 1781 and 1782 at Monticello, are fresh with the recollections of boyhood and early manhood, when the forest primeval stretched from his home to the unexplored and mysterious West.

"The round horned elk," he remarks "seems to stand in the same relation to the palmated elk as the red deer does to the fallow. It has abounded in Virginia; has been seen, within my knowledge, on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge since the year 1765, is now common beyond those mountains, has been often brought to us and tamed, and its horns are in the hands of many." He designates it the "*Alces Americanus cornibus teretibus*," and correcting Buffon, distinguishes three, if not four, distinct species of the Elk tribe. "The skins of a moose, and of a caribou," he adds, "differ more from each other, and

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from that of the round horned elk than I ever saw two skins differ which belonged to different individuals of any wild species. These differences are in the colour, length and coarseness of the hair, and in the size, texture, and marks of the skin."

Again after tabling the various squirrels, gray, black, red, etc. with their weights, he writes: "I have enumerated the squirrels according to my own knowledge derived from daily sight of them." Of Catesby's *American Birds*, we are told: "his drawings are better as to form and attitude than colouring, which is generally too high." Jefferson knew the popular as well as the Latin names of all Virginian birds from bald eagle and turkey buzzard down to wren and humming bird, and enumerated a score unnoticed by Catesby. His knowledge of insects appears in disquisitions on bees and weevils. His letters teem with observations on the whole vegetable and animal kingdom. He pursued agriculture as a science, and gardened as a botanist.

A naturalist is not often a successful politician; for the proper study of mankind is man. But Jefferson's mind seems to have expanded eagerly and easily as new fields of inquiry opened before it. His curiosity was universal; to satisfy it he employed unusual talents and exceptional industry. The tastes and interests of boyhood developed into hobbies and scientific pursuits. Nothing in his life will astonish us more than the variety of his aptitudes. A gift for languages, a gift for mathematics and mechanics, a profound interest in law and custom, a passion for music and architecture,—all these were indulged and pursued through the stress and strain of a most arduous public life. We shall not try to distinguish the qualities he inherited from the qualities he acquired. He was happy alike in his birth and his birthplace. But there

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is nothing far-fetched or fanciful in supposing that a joyous, healthy boyhood spent mostly with nature gave him that strength and flexibility of mind and body which distinguished Jefferson even among the giants of that heroic age.

## CHAPTER II

### AT COLLEGE

"To scorn delights and live laborious days."

— MILTON

By the death of his father, Jefferson, a boy of fourteen, was thrown on his own resources without a relative or friend qualified to advise or guide him. Recalling this long afterwards in a letter to his eldest grandson, remembering also "the various sorts of bad company with which I was associated from time to time," he wrote: "I am astonished that I did not turn off with some of them and become as worthless to society as they were."

His father had left him an estate and a classical education. He prized them both. No man ever enjoyed home and home life more. In later years he always left his beloved and beautiful Monticello with reluctance, and returned with a joyful heart. Yet in old age he was often heard to say that if he had to choose between the pleasure derived from his classical studies and his property, he would decide for the former.

Jefferson's second schoolmaster, James Maury, a correct classical scholar, was a Whig clergyman of broad views, who lived fourteen miles from Shadwell at the foot of Peter's Mountain. Maury was of Huguenot extraction, and had come to Virginia as tutor to the Monroe family. His fee for board and tuition was twenty pounds a year —

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rather a high figure at that time, and four pounds more than Douglas charged. But we may suppose that the diet as well as the instruction was better; for Jefferson used to tell his grandchildren of the "mouldy pies" at his first boarding school.

After two years under Maury Jefferson wrote a letter, the earliest we possess, to his guardian, John Harvey. It was dated Shadwell, January 14, 1760:—

Sir: I was at Colo. Peter Randolph's about a fortnight ago, and my schooling falling into discourse, he said he thought it would be to my Advantage to go to the College, and was desirous I should go, as indeed I am myself for several Reasons. In the first place, as long as I stay at the Mountain, the loss of one-fourth of my Time is inevitable, by Company's coming here and detaining me from School. And likewise my Absence will, in a great measure, put a Stop to so much Company, and by that means lessen the Expenses of the Estate in Housekeeping. And on the other Hand by going to the College I shall get a more universal Acquaintance, which may hereafter be serviceable to me; and I suppose I can pursue my Studies in the Greek and Latin as well there as here, and likewise learn something of the Mathematics. I shall be glad of your Opinion,

And remain, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Thomas Jefferson, Jr.

His guardian consented, and accordingly in the spring of 1760, being then just seventeen, Jefferson went to William and Mary College, where he was speedily beset by all the temptations that assailed and still assail young gentlemen of wealth in Virginia and elsewhere. On his way to college, we are told, he spent some merry days with Colonel Dandridge of Hanover county, "in junketing, dancing and high jinks of all sorts." Here he met for the first time a youth who was destined to set Liberty aflame. Patrick Henry — for it was no other — lived near by and enjoyed

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close intimacy with Dandridge. Though only twenty-four he had already failed in business. As Jefferson wrote long afterwards to Henry's biographer, Wirt: "Mr. Henry had a little before broken up his store, or rather it had broken him up." But if his purse was empty, his heart was light. He fiddled and danced, jested and rollicked with a gaiety which enchanted the youngsters. Henry's dress and manners betokened the rude life of the backwoods. His great delight, wrote Jefferson, "was to put on his hunting shirt, collect a parcel of overseers and such like people, and spend weeks together in the piny woods, camping at night and cracking jokes round a light wood fire." He spoke with a mixed brogue — "larnin'" for learning, and "nateral" for natural. Jefferson was attracted by talents and a character so unlike his own. A short time afterwards Patrick Henry appeared in Williamsburg. He had "studied" law for a few weeks, and had prevailed upon the Examiners to grant him a license to practice at the Virginian Bar. His natural eloquence and abilities, often displayed in bold opposition to the Crown, soon won him such a reputation that in 1765 he was elected by Louisa county to the House of Burgesses. On his visits to court at Williamsburg Henry used to stop with Jefferson, and the two friends soon began to share unusually advanced views about political and religious liberty.

— Williamsburg, where Jefferson was to work for the next fifteen years, is situated between the York river and the James river. Jamestown, the old capital, had never thriven; so in 1699 it was decided to transfer the seat of government to a more salubrious spot. A site for the new city, named after the reigning monarch, was selected in true English fashion by a jury of twelve freeholders.

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The college of William and Mary in brick, designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the style of Chelsea Hospital, supplied a convenient meeting place for the Burgesses until the State House or Capitol was completed in 1705. A palace for the royal governor soon rose between the College and the Capitol; and the famous Powder Horn, which still stands to remind us of the little town's glorious connection with the history of Liberty, provided the colony with a magazine, an armory, and a blacksmith's shop. Then a church was erected, so that the loyal inhabitants might conform to the established religion and pray for their King and his governor, whose large square pew, elevated above the rest, was covered with an imposing canopy of red silk. An inn, appropriately called the Raleigh Tavern, completed the principal buildings.<sup>1</sup> Its Apollo Room saw many scenes of Colonial festivity before it gained political renown in the first act of the Revolutionary drama. ¶ Some two hundred wooden houses and a bare thousand souls,<sup>2</sup> including slaves, made up the whole city when Jefferson rode into it in 1760.

Since then it has scarcely doubled, and time has wrought fewer changes than in any American town of equal age. You may still see the Colonial homes of the Randolphs, of Blair, of Chancellor Wythe, and others. If these old timber houses with their painted porticos,

<sup>1</sup> In his *Notes on Virginia*, written in 1781-8, Jefferson says that the only public buildings in Virginia worthy of mention are "the capitol, the palace, the college, the hospital for lunatics, all of them in Williamsburg, heretofore the seat of our government." He thought the Capitol—a mixture of Doric and Ionic—"the most pleasing piece of architecture we have." The Palace was spacious and commodious, though not handsome. His remarks on the college and hospital are disrespectful—"rude misshapen piles, which but that they have roofs would be mistaken for brick-kilns."

<sup>2</sup> In *Notes on Virginia* Jefferson says that the population of Williamsburg never exceeded 1800.

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their dormer windows and neglected rose gardens, suggest only faded gentility to the casual globe trotter, they would impress the imagination of a Childe Harold with thoughts of a change in human institutions and government as momentous as those revealed by the Acropolis, the Forum, St. Sophia, or Westminster Abbey. The littleness of the stage only magnifies the giants who strode across it. For William and Mary, even more than its elder sister Harvard, trained the statesmen, lawgivers, and jurists who were to build up a mighty republic; and the little tidewater capital has a right to remember with pride the days when Virginia's heroic sons, Washington, George Wythe, George Mason, Patrick Henry, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Marshall, and the rest of that far-famed band, were familiar figures in its streets.

Hardly more than a village, Williamsburg offered in the middle of the eighteenth century as much gaiety and good society as any Colonial town. When the six-horse coaches came lumbering in for some great event — a horse race, a ball, a marriage, or the opening of the Grand Assembly — the little place buzzed with as much noise and pomp as an English county town on like occasions. Judges in their scarlet robes, students in cap and gown, gentlemen in gorgeous velvets and ruffles, their ladies in trailing gowns of rich brocade, decked with feathers, ribbons, and lace made a brave and gallant show. During the winter season, writes Dr. Chandler, one of Virginia's historians, many planters visited Williamsburg and "indulged in an incessant round of gaieties." Social functions celebrated the annual meeting of the Assembly. From time to time London companies came to present the plays of Shakespeare or Congreve. Cards and the dice-box, horse-racing, cock fighting, and all the diversions of Mer-



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rie England flourished in that rich happy-go-lucky society of old Virginia.

Dr. Chandler quotes a typical Williamsburg programme of October, 1737, for the entertainment of gentlemen and ladies at the Old Field. Besides the horse races, a two-shilling hat was to be cudgelled for. Twenty fiddlers, each playing a different tune, were to compete for another prize. Twelve boys were entered for the 112 yards race, the prize for which was a twelve-shilling hat. Then came a singing contest, next a wrestling match with a pair of silver buckles for the winner; and last but not least the prettiest girl on the field was to be awarded a pair of silk stockings of "one pistole's value."<sup>1</sup>

Into this dizzy pool of pleasure Jefferson plunged, and looking back afterwards wondered that he swam safe to shore. The college was rowdy, and we have glimpses in his letters of some boyish escapades. He gave the credit for his rescue to three older men, William Small, George Wythe, and Peyton Randolph, who took him in charge. It was indeed fortunate that the fatherless boy, wealthy, flattered, free to do as he liked, a good sportsman, a bold rider, throbbing with animal spirits and the joy of life, found friends able to detect and draw out his talents; still more fortunate that fame spurred him on, and that a passion for knowledge, combined with a taste for letters, arts, and science took hold upon him. "I was often thrown," he wrote of these student days, "into the society of horse-racers, card players, fox hunters, scientific and professional men, and of dignified men; and many a time I have asked myself in the enthusiastic moment of the

<sup>1</sup> See *Colonial Virginia* by J. A. C. Chandler and T. B. Thames, Richmond, Va., 1907. I owe to Dr. Chandler a most delightful and instructive visit in December, 1921, to William and Mary College, over which he presides.

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death of a fox, the victory of a favourite horse, the issue of a question eloquently argued at the bar, or in the Great Council of the nation, 'Well, which of these kinds of reputation should I prefer? That of a horse jockey? a fox hunter? an orator? or the honest advocate of my country's rights?' In moments of temptation or difficulty 'I would ask myself—what would Dr. Small, Mr. Wythe, Peyton Randolph do in this situation?'"

After a year at College Jefferson found that he had spent too much on dress and horses. So in a remorseful letter to his guardian he requested that, as the college bills seemed to be excessive, his whole expenditure during the year at Williamsburg should be charged to his separate share of the property. "No" was the good-natured reply, "if you have sowed your wild oats in this way, the estate can well afford to pay the bill."

In the Autobiography we have a summary view of his debt to William and Mary College, or rather to Dr. Small, a remarkable person of whom little is known save that he was a friend of Thomas Jefferson and of Erasmus Darwin:—

"In the spring of 1760 I went to William and Mary College, where I continued for two years. It was my great good fortune, and what probably fixed the destinies of my life, that Dr. William Small of Scotland was then Professor of Mathematics, a man profound in most of the useful branches of science, with a happy talent of communication, correct and gentlemanly manners, and an enlarged and liberal mind. He, most happily for me, became soon attached to me, and made me his daily companion when not engaged in the school; and from his conversation I got my first views of the expansion of science, and of the system of things in which we are placed. Fortunately, the philosophical chair became vacant soon after my arrival in college, and he was appointed to fill it *per interim*: and he was the first who ever gave, in that college, regular lectures in Ethics, Rhetoric, and Belles Lettres.

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He returned to Europe in 1762, having previously filled up the measure of his goodness to me, by procuring for me, from his most intimate friend, George Wythe, a reception as a student of law, under his direction, and introduced me to the acquaintance and familiar table of Governor Fauquier, the ablest man who had ever filled that office. With him, and at his table, Dr. Small and Mr. Wythe, his *amici omnium horarum*, and myself, formed a *partie quarrée*, and to the habitual conversations on these occasions I owed much instruction. Mr. Wythe continued to be my faithful and beloved mentor in youth, and my most affectionate friend through life."

In another account of his days at William and Mary given in 1815 to Girardin, one of the historians of Virginia, he says that Dr. Small was Wythe's "bosom friend, and to me as a father." To Small's "enlightened and affectionate guidance of my studies while at college I am indebted for everything."<sup>1</sup> At the dinners in the Governor's house, he adds, "I have heard more good sense, more rational and philosophical conversation than in all my life besides. They were truly Attic societies. The Governor was musical also, and a good performer; and associated me with two or three other amateurs in his weekly concerts." Governor Fauquier has been described by Burk in his history of Virginia. "With some allowances," we are told, he "was everything that could have been wished for by Virginia under a royal government. Generous, liberal, elegant in his manners and acquirements, his example left an impression of taste, refinement, and erudition on the character of the colony, which eminently contributed to its present high reputation in the arts." But unfortunately his accomplishments were marred by at least one blemish. Fauquier was the son of

<sup>1</sup> It will be noticed that Dr. Small was a Scot. Lord Brougham in his review of Tucker's Life of Jefferson, *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1837, says that Dr. Small's brother was a Minister at Dundee.

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a Director of the Bank of England and something of an economist; for he had written a treatise against the National Debt, and was one of the first to advocate a capitation or income tax as an alternative to borrowing. But the Governor's private practice fell lamentably short of his public precepts. Burk says that Anson on his return from circumnavigating the earth fell in with Fauquier, and won at cards in a single night his whole patrimony:—

“Afterwards, being captivated by the striking graces of this gentleman's person and conversation, he procured for him the government of Virginia. Unreclaimed by the former subversion of his fortune, he introduced the same fatal propensity to gaming into Virginia; and the example of so many virtues and accomplishments alloyed but by a single vice, was too successful in extending the influence of this pernicious and ruinous practice. He found among the people of his new government a character compounded of the same elements as his own; and he found little difficulty in rendering fashionable a practice which had, before his arrival, prevailed to an alarming extent. During the recess of the courts of judicature and assemblies, he visited the most distinguished landholders in the Colonies, and the rage for playing deep, reckless of time, health, or money, spread like a contagion among a class proverbial for their hospitality, their politeness, and fondness for expense. In everything beside, Fauquier was the ornament and delight of Virginia.”<sup>1</sup>

Governor Fauquier was also a free thinker, an admirer of Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, and it is possible that his conversation may have exercised some influence on Jefferson's religious opinions. But it is more probable — and for this we have Madison's authority — that young Jefferson learned nothing worse from Fauquier than an easy dignity of manner, a refinement in conversation, and “that taste for the elegancies of life with which he always embellished the plainness of the republican and the sim-

<sup>1</sup> Burk, *History of Virginia*, III, 333.

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plicity of the philosopher." Certainly he never fell a victim to the gambling mania. From his minutely kept accounts it appears that occasionally he lost or won a few shillings at cards or backgammon in a friend's house. But from his youth upwards he eschewed and detested gambling. His overseer, Edmund Bacon, never saw a card at Monticello, and "had particular orders" to suppress card playing among the negroes. As there are people who cannot enjoy a climb without a risk, so there are people who cannot enjoy a game without a stake. From perhaps the most irrational and pitiful of the passions that have wrecked the happiness of many good men, and the careers of some great men, Jefferson by natural disposition or deliberate choice was wholly exempt. So too, though fond of good wine and a connoisseur, he was abstemious, never touching spirits; and though a producer of tobacco he never consumed it in any form.

At college Jefferson contracted a passion for reading and collecting books, and began to pursue some of the hobbies which remained with him through life. In Chambers he studied Anglo-Saxon in order to trace out for himself the origins of the Common Law. To Greek, Latin, and French, of which he had perfect mastery, he added a fair knowledge of Spanish and Italian. He made some attempts too at German, but never became familiar with it. It is characteristic of the man that he generally avoided fiction. But his list of favourite novelists, though small, was a good one — Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Marмонтel, Gil Blas, and Cervantes. Don Quixote, it is said, was the only novel he read more than once, or very keenly relished. When Ossian appeared Jefferson was entranced by "this rude bard of the North" and determined to learn the language in order to enjoy his songs in their original

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form. He had met a kinsman of James McPherson in Virginia and wrote (1773) to beg him to procure regardless of expense a copy of the Celtic manuscript, as well as a Celtic grammar and a Celtic dictionary.

Jefferson probably worked pretty hard as a freshman though he did not neglect the pleasures of town or country. But his second year in College, we are told, "was more diligently employed than the first. Company, the riding horse, and soon the violin were nearly discarded." He habitually studied, so he afterwards declared, fifteen hours a day. His only exercise was to run sharply a mile out of the city and back at twilight. After two years he took his degree, and left college for Wythe's Chambers a proficient mathematician, a good classic, with a keen interest in philosophy and a fair knowledge of modern languages.

—During his vacations at Shadwell he usually gave three-fourths of the day to his books, rising at dawn, as soon as the hands of the clock on his bedroom mantelpiece could be distinguished in the grey light. At the end of the day he crossed the Rivanna in a canoe and walked up his little mountain, the top of which was soon to be levelled in preparation for his first experiment in architecture.

## CHAPTER III

### STUDENT OF LAW

"A man that is young in years may be old in hours if he has lost no time." — BACON

ONLY a few of Jefferson's letters have been preserved for the seven years of his life at College and in Chambers. The early ones are to his chum John Page, afterwards his rival for the Governorship of Virginia. Several are headed "Devilsburg," his nickname for Virginia's capital. They tell of mirth and jollity, of "dull old Coke," and other law studies; of riding, dancing, and fiddling; of a resolution (not carried out) to visit Europe and Egypt; of disorders in the College followed by expulsions and rustications; of the opening of the Law Courts, October, 1763, "which I must attend constantly"; of shorthand, then called "tachygraphy"; but for the most part of their love affairs. His most serious flirtation was with a Miss Rebecca Burwell, the Belinda of his correspondence. The lover was too cool, or the courtship too protracted. The belles of Virginia in those days expected to be married in their teens, and Miss Burwell cut the courtship short by marrying another in 1764. Jefferson, who had lavished Latin puns, Greek anagrams, and indifferent English verses upon her, was a little hurt, but speedily recovered from Cupid's dart. Indeed he had no time to be lovesick. Law was his mistress; a passion for learning had seized upon him. In

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Wythe's chambers he was hard at work filling his commonplace book with abstracts and disquisitions, or attending Court, or "devilling" for his learned friend and master. His ambition was set upon success at the Bar, not without thought perhaps of a public career.

At this time Jefferson's appearance was striking rather than handsome; but his vivacity, high spirits, fine manners, and conversational powers, to say nothing of his skill in dancing, made him a general favourite. He was above six feet two in height, slim and straight, with luxuriant and silky auburn hair, fair complexion and angular features. A long nose, firm chin, and sensitive mouth spelled strong emotion and unswerving resolution. Contemporaries tell us that his eyes were hazel, full set and expressive. His temper was well under control; his bearing so courtly, dignified, and correct that he never gave or had occasion to repel a personal insult.

We have seen how much Jefferson owed to Dr. William Small, the mathematical and philosophical Scotchman who introduced him first to science and then to law in the person of George Wythe. Wythe was one of Virginia's greatest sons. Of independent fortune, but without any regular education, he made himself the best Latin and Greek scholar in the Colony, besides acquiring a fair knowledge of mathematics, and the natural sciences. A doctinaire in the best sense of the word, he had studied Coke and Locke to good purpose, and held very liberal opinions about popular rights and religious liberty with a quiet and unobtrusive tenacity. He was already in the enjoyment of a large practice when Jefferson entered his Chambers. Few lawyers have been better fitted to nurse talent, and few have had more to nurse; for into the same chambers, following Jefferson, came John Marshall,



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the great Chief Justice; and after Wythe had become Chancellor of Virginia Henry Clay served him as secretary. But Jefferson was Wythe's favourite pupil, and to Jefferson he left his valuable library. Wythe is said to have been eccentric, possibly because he carried the religion of humanity from the region of the abstract into personal practice. During his lifetime he emancipated all his slaves and made provision for their subsistence. In Jefferson's character of his "beloved mentor" no blemishes appear. So inflexible was his integrity, so warm his patriotism, such his devotion to liberty and to the natural rights of man that he might be called the Virginian Cato but for a disinterested liberality which contrasted with the avarice of the Roman. Called to the Bar of the General Court he soon — to quote Jefferson — became first in his profession by virtue of superior learning, elocution, and logic: —

"In pleading he never indulged himself with a useless or declamatory thought or word — and became as distinguished by correctness and purity of conduct in his profession, as he was by his industry and fidelity to those who employed him. He was early elected to the House of Burgesses, and continued in it till the Revolution. On the first dawn of that, instead of higgling on halfway principles, as others did who feared to follow their reason, he took his stand on the solid ground that the only link of political union between us and Great Britain was the identity of our executive; and that the nation and its parliament had no more authority over us than we had over them, and that we were co-ordinate nations with Great Britain and Hanover."

There had always been democratic elements in Virginia, though the rich planters of the Colony usually supported Church and King. Revolutionary principles had flamed up as early as 1675 in Bacon's Rebellion, and Wythe's teaching laid the intellectual basis of a school to which Patrick Henry's eloquence soon lent fire and force. So by

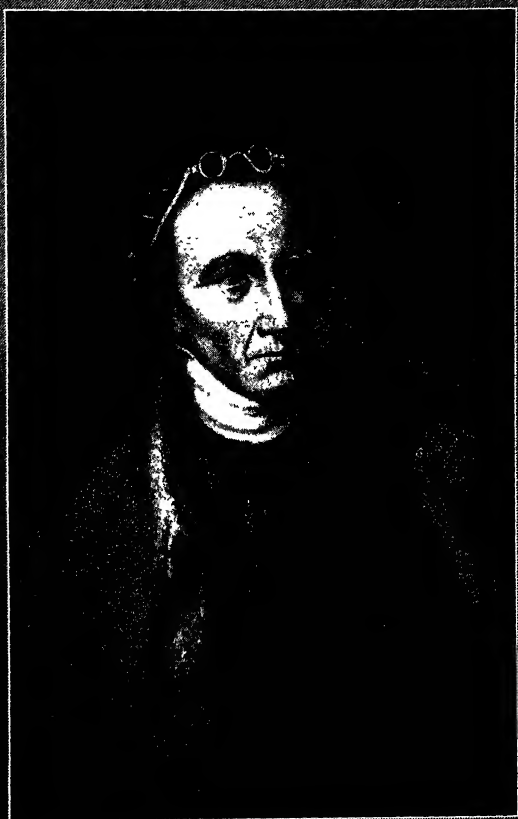
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degrees the school became a party, and the party helped to found a nation. Before Jefferson had been long in Chambers a trial of strength took place between the dissenters and the State Church, which gave Patrick Henry an opportunity of coming forward as a village Hampden, while Jefferson played the more obscure part of Selden. The clergy of the Established Church of Virginia received their stipends in tobacco. In 1758 the Virginian Assembly passed the so-called Twopenny Act under which salaries were to be paid, not in pounds of tobacco, but in pence at the very low rate of two pence per pound of tobacco. The clergy were naturally indignant and their diocesan, the Bishop of London, supported them. The Governor approved the Act; but after a war of words and pamphlets King George the Third's Privy Council disallowed it, on the ground that the clergy were entitled to the tobacco or its market price. In 1763 a parson in Hanover county brought suit to recover his salary of 16,000 pounds of tobacco. By the ruling of the Court the parson could recover; but the amount was left to the jury. Under these circumstances Patrick Henry was employed to go into Court and harangue the jury. It was his first important appearance. Popular feeling ran high against royalty and the royal church. At the outset Henry stammered, awkward and embarrassed. But after a few moments natural eloquence, fired by Presbyterian zeal, found passionate utterance. His bold and scathing denunciations of the clergy drove them in a flutter from the crowded court house. Even royalty was roughly handled. The King, he cried, by upholding the claims of the parsons against the people of Virginia, and vetoing the Act of their Legislature, had forfeited all claim to obedience. When plaintiff's counsel charged that "the

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Gentleman has spoken treason," Patrick Henry only grew more audacious and extravagant. Amid a scene of wild excitement and commotion the jury after consulting five minutes found a verdict of one penny for the plaintiff. Loud was the applause. The King's authority had been challenged, and diminished, in the King's Court of Justice. Patrick Henry was carried from the Court in triumph on the shoulders of a cheering crowd — probably to the lodgings of his young friend Jefferson.

When Jefferson came to found a liberal University, he discovered, as Milton had done, that New Presbyter was but Old Priest writ large. The intolerance of the Presbyterians proved a more formidable obstacle to enlightenment than the indifference of the Anglican Clergy. But at this time the Presbyterians were supporting the disestablishment of a rival sect. Jefferson's notes on the Parson's Case have probably perished. But an extract from his Common-Place book in the following year (1764) proves the thoroughness with which he examined the historical connection of law and religion. It was made by Jefferson in 1814 in a letter to his friend Thomas Cooper, a theoretical lawyer, who had suffered for his liberal opinions during the American Reign of Terror. "When I was a student of law," wrote Jefferson, "now half a century ago, after getting through Coke on Littleton, whose matter cannot be abridged, I was in the habit of abridging and common-placing what I read meriting it, and of sometimes mixing my own reflections on the subject. I now enclose you the extract from these entries which I promised. They were written at the time of life when I was bold in the pursuit of knowledge, never fearing to follow truth and reason to whatever results they led, and bearding every authority which stood in their way. This



*Painted by Sully*



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must be the apology, if you find the conclusions bolder than historical facts and principles will warrant."

The "Sample," number 873 in the Common-Place book, answers the question "Whether Christianity is part of the Common Law," and is worth reading as a proof of Jefferson's industry, learning, and legal dexterity. The argument turns on the meaning of "ancien scripture" in Prisot (c. 5.) which Finch had translated "Holy Scriptures." Sir Matthew Hale declared that Christianity is parcel of the laws of England, and derived thence his authority for burning witches! Blackstone followed Hale. Lord Mansfield declared more cautiously that "the essential principles of revealed religion are a part of the Common Law." Jefferson argued that "ancient scripture," if it referred to Holy Writ, must have meant the Old Testament, which would be absurd.

Turning from this series of judicial utterances, Jefferson points out that the Common Law was introduced by the Saxons on their settlement in England in the fifth century, whereas the Kings of the Heptarchy only embraced Christianity between 598 and 686 A.D. "Here then was a space of two hundred years during which the common law was in existence and Christianity no part of it." He draws further evidence from the silence of Bracton and other early writers, and cites Justice Fortescue Aland "who possessed more Saxon learning than all the judges and writers before mentioned put together." Finally he examines the Laws of Alfred, and shows how an "awkward monkish fabrication" prefixed to them four chapters of Jewish law which are inconsistent with Alfred's Code. Why then did the Judges of England perpetuate these frauds and forgeries? Jefferson's answer is characteristic:—

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“In truth, the alliance between church and state in England has ever made their judges accomplices in the frauds of the clergy; and even bolder than they are; for instead of being contented with the surreptitious introduction of these four chapters of Exodus, they have taken the whole leap, and declared at once that the whole Bible and Testament, in a lump, make a part of the common law of the land; the first judicial declaration of which was by Sir Matthew Hale. And thus they incorporate into the English code laws made for Jews alone, and precepts of the gospel, intended by their benevolent author as obligatory only in *foro conscientiae*; and they arm the whole with the coercions of the municipal law.”

By the time his student life ended Jefferson was one of the best read men in Virginia, if not in the United States. In proof of his prodigious industry and wide attainments we may cite a course of study which he drew up about this time for Madison, Monroe, and other young friends who were preparing for college and the Virginian Bar. A copy of it was sent by Jefferson in 1814 to a grandson, George Wythe Randolph. Jefferson tells young Randolph that it was “written near fifty years ago for the use of a young friend, whose course of reading was confided to me.” It formed, he added, “a basis for the studies of others subsequently placed under my direction.” In this copy the list of books recommended was revised and brought up to date. The paper begins by demanding as “absolutely necessary” an acquaintance with the Latin and French languages. To these he would add Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, as not only useful in the most familiar occurrences of life, but “peculiarly engaging and delightful.” Besides, the faculties of the mind, like the members of the body, are strengthened and improved by exercise. “Mathematical reasonings and deductions are therefore a fine preparation for investigating the abstruse speculations of the law.”

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A list of books on Mathematics, Astronomy, Geography, and Natural Philosophy follows; and our young professor proceeds: "This foundation being laid, you may enter regularly on the study of the law, taking with it such of its kindred sciences as will contribute to eminence in its attainment . . . The carrying on several studies at a time is attended with advantage. Variety relieves the mind as well as the eye . . . The mean is therefore to be steered, and a competent space of time allotted to each branch of study." A day's reading is accordingly divided into five parts.

1. Till eight in the morning employ yourself to Physical studies, namely Agriculture, Chemistry, Anatomy, Zoology, Botany Ethics, and Natural Religion, Religion Sectarian and Natural Law. Under Agriculture the books to be read include Tull and Arthur Young; under Ethics come Locke, Stewart, Condorcet, Cicero, Seneca, Hutcheson, etc.; under 'Religion Sectarian' the Bible, Sterne's sermons, and Priestley's *Corruptions of Christianity*; under Natural Law, Vattel.

2. From eight to twelve read Law. After tracing a general course of reading in the Common Law and Chancery, Jefferson gives a list of law books, and then adds: "In reading the reporters enter in a common-place book every case of value, condensed into the narrowest compass possible, which will admit of presenting distinctly the principles of the case. This operation is doubly useful, insomuch as it obliges the student to seek out the pith of the case, and habituates him to a condensation of thought, and to an acquisition of the most valuable of all the talents, that of never using two words where one will do."

3. From twelve to one read Politics. Here the books to be read include Locke on Government, Sidney's *Discourses on Government*, Priestley's *First Principles of Government*, Montesquieu, Hatsell's *Precedents of the House of Commons*, *Select Parliamentary Debates of England and Ireland*, *The Federalist*, Say's *Economic Politique*, Malthus on Population, and de Tracy's *Political Economy* 'now about to be printed.' (1814)

4. In the afternoon read History. This course comprises the Greek and Latin historians in the original, Gibbon's *Roman Empire*; for



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Modern Europe, Millot, Russel and Robertson, and a number of English and American writers, including Bacon's Henry the Seventh, Camden's Elizabeth, Hume 'republicanised and abridged,' Robertson's America, Ramsay's History of the American Revolution, and Burk's History of Virginia.

5. From dark to bedtime. The last hours of the day or rather night are assigned to belles lettres, criticism, rhetoric and oratory. Among poets "Shakespeare must be singled out by one who wishes to learn the full powers of the English language." Among books of criticism Tooke's *Diversions of Purley* is recommended. For rhetoric and prosody, Blair, Sheridan and Mason.

Among forensic efforts Eugene Aram's defence is singled out as "a model of logic, condensation of matter and classical purity of style."

In spite of the books added to, or substituted for, the old list (unfortunately lost) Jefferson wrote apologetically of the paper as betraying its juvenile date. That is what makes it valuable; for it gives us a glimpse of the student's habits and methods. It helps us to trace the pedigree of his ideas, in so far as they were drawn from the projectors and philosophers of the past. For we shall never understand Jefferson if we leave out his inexhaustible appetite for knowledge; nor appreciate his consistency and idealism, if we forget that he was well versed in Sidney and Locke before he plunged into politics. The word statesman is often misapplied in our over-governed democracies. It is too often bestowed on men of small parts and no character, who have by hook or by crook obtained high office. No one need inquire about their favourite books in looking for a key to their policies. For when the key is put in the lock, and the box opened, it will be found empty. They live from hand to mouth without foresight or retrospect; they spread their sails to every passing breeze; they steer without chart or com-

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pass. But Jefferson is the type of a true statesman. He read hard and thought hard for years before venturing upon the practice of law and politics. To seekers after the history of republican ideas, and of the constitutional changes which have overturned all the old systems of government in the century succeeding his death, no democratic leader of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will afford more profitable study than Thomas Jefferson.

Meanwhile a new drama was being prepared which would give the political genius and military talents of Virginia a field of opportunity, and magnify the little provincial stage of Williamsburg into a grand amphitheatre with all the world for onlookers. Two men, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, who might have remained in obscurity, were thereby to win renown, the one as a general and statesman, the other as a statesman and philosopher.

But before either of them dreamed of American Independence Patrick Henry was on the revolutionary war path. He did as much to inflame young Virginia against church and king as Samuel Adams to incense New England against the pretensions and encroachments of the English government.

(In 1764, the year after the Parson's Case, George Grenville's administrations adopted measures for taxing the American Colonies, for strengthening the Navigation Acts, and for tightening up the British monopoly of Colonial trade. Pitt's glorious war with France had left a large debt, a depression of trade, heavy taxes and much popular discontent.) The Colonial policy of Grenville was justified in parliament by the cost of expelling the French from Canada and the Mississippi region. For these services the Colonies must be called upon to show their

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gratitude, and it was announced that in the following year a stamp tax would be imposed on business transactions in America. Wills, mortgages, contracts, newspapers, almanacs, etc. were to be subjected to stamp duties varying from threepence to ten pounds. The proceeds were to be spent on the support of British troops quartered in the Colonies for the purpose of quelling disaffected French and Indians in the newly conquered territories.

After a war, however victorious, taxes are never popular. The people who pay the piper are seldom grateful to those who called the tune. The American colonies had contributed men and money to the war. Some of them were still smarting from severe losses at the hands of the French and Indians. They had acquiesced in the Navigation Laws, though they often murmured against them. They were accustomed to an Imperial tariff, and the New Englanders at least were pretty skilful smugglers. The regulation of overseas trade and navigation had always been an imperial concern. But the Stamp Act was a dangerous encroachment upon the self-governing powers of the Colonial Assemblies and upon their local sources of revenue. The Colonists were jealous of their rights and by no means inclined to welcome, much less to support, a garrison of British soldiers.

• The Stamp Act, announced by Grenville in the Budget of 1764, was passed in the following March. Colonial petitions against it, on the ground that parliament had no right to tax the Colonies, were refused consideration under a rule of procedure forbidding petitions against certain classes of Money Bills. The news of the passing of the Stamp Act reached America early in April, 1765. Strangely enough it evoked no serious demonstration from the New

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Englanders, either in their legislative assemblies or popular meetings. It was in loyal, aristocratic Virginia that the constitutional challenge was thrown down and the might of parliament defied.

Again it was Jefferson's friend, Patrick Henry, who stepped forward:—

“the forest born Demosthenes

Whose thunder shook the Philip of the Seas;”

and this time his oration shook the foundations, not of a Colonial church, but of a Colonial Empire. The session of the House of Burgesses was nearly over. The Conservative leaders, the men of family, influence, and property, had no intention of making trouble over the Stamp Act. Patrick Henry was, as he wrote long afterwards, a new member, young, inexperienced, unacquainted with the forms of the House or the members that composed it. But “finding the men of weight averse to opposition, and the commencement of the tax at hand, and that no person was likely to step forth,” he determined to venture; and “alone, unadvised, and unassisted” wrote his resolutions on the blank leaf of an old law book, and brought them before the House:—

“Violent debate ensued, many threats were uttered and much abuse cast on me by the party for submission. After a long and warm contest, the resolutions passed by a very small majority, perhaps of one or two only. The alarm spread throughout America with astonishing quickness, and the ministerial parties were overwhelmed. The great point of resistance to British taxation was universally established in the colonies. This brought on the war which finally separated the two countries and gave independence to ours.”

Henry's resolutions, five in number, asserted in unequivocal terms that the Colonists enjoyed all British privileges and immunities, and that their general assembly possessed “the sole right and power to levy taxes and im-

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positions upon the inhabitants of this colony." Wythe, Pendleton, Peyton Randolph, and other leading men opposed them, contending that the same sentiments had been expressed previously in a more prudent and conciliatory manner. Henry's fiery eloquence just carried the day. One passage from his speech has come down to us: "Cæsar," he cried, "had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third—" "Treason," cried the Speaker, "Treason, treason" echoed the Conservative members. But Henry, unshaken by the interruptions, completed his sentence: "and George the Third may profit by their example. If this be treason make the most of it."

During this debate Jefferson, as he tells us, stood at the door of the lobby of the House of Burgesses. "I heard the splendid display of Mr. Henry's talents as a popular orator. They were great indeed; such as I have never heard from any other man. He appeared to me to speak as Homer wrote."

Many years later in a letter to Wirt, who was writing Patrick Henry's life, Jefferson did justice to the moderate party:—

"Subsequent events favoured the bolder spirits of Henry, the Lees, Pages, Mason, etc., *with whom I went in all points*. Sensible, however, of the importance of unanimity among our constituents, although we often wished to have gone faster, we slackened our pace, that our less ardent colleagues might keep up with us; and they, on their part, differing nothing from us in principle, quickened their gait somewhat beyond that which their prudence might of itself have advised, and thus consolidated the phalanx which breasted the power of Britain. By this harmony of the bold with the cautious, we advanced with our constituents in undivided mass, and with fewer examples of separation than, perhaps, existed in any other part of the Union."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson to Wirt, August 14, 1814.

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These resolutions fanned into a flame the gathering discontent of the Northern Colonies. In many places riots broke out. Boxes of stamps were burnt. Nobody would buy or use a stamp. Pitt espoused the American cause. The British relented a little, and in the following year after a long debate the Stamp Act was repealed. Virginia reposed again. Patrick Henry returned to his briefs and Jefferson resumed his studies.

## CHAPTER IV

BARRISTER AND POLITICIAN, 1767 TO 1773

JEFFERSON usually spent his summer vacations at Shadwell, and there in 1764 he celebrated his twenty-first birthday by planting an avenue of locust trees. He was now squire and Justice of the Peace and master of a fine estate. But his happiness was soon clouded by the death of his eldest sister who had been a near and very dear companion. Among his papers after his death was found a Latin epitaph, touching in its simplicity:—

“Ah, Joanna, puellarum optima,  
Ah, aevi virentis flore praerepta,  
Sit tibi terra levis;<sup>1</sup>  
Longe, longaeque valeto.”

In the following spring (1766) Jefferson began his travels. Leaving his native state for the first time he visited Annapolis, Philadelphia, and New York. At Annapolis he saw the rejoicings over the repeal of the Stamp Act. At Philadelphia he was inoculated against smallpox by the then famous Dr. Shippen. At New York he stayed with Elbridge Gerry and made a friendship which was afterwards to assume political importance. A year later — in the spring of 1767 — after spending under his “beloved mentor” George Wythe nearly as many years in legal studies as Patrick Henry had spent weeks, Jefferson was called to the Virginian Bar. He was entering his twenty-

<sup>1</sup> Randall and others give ‘laevis’ (smooth) for ‘levis’ (light)!

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fourth year and stepped almost at once into a good practice, which continued, as he says, "until the Revolution shut up the Courts of Justice."

\ Jefferson kept a register of all his general court cases. In his first year he had sixty-eight, and in all subsequent years to the end of 1773 over a hundred. In 1774 when all business began to be upset by the turmoil of Revolution, his practice declined; and in August he transferred it to his kinsman Edmund Randolph, son of Sir John Randolph, nephew of Peyton Randolph, and afterwards Attorney General in Washington's first Administration. There is no record extant of his work in the county courts. But we know that he was retained in no less than 430 cases during the year 1771. In those days it was not possible to make a great fortune at the Bar of Virginia.<sup>1</sup> Jefferson's profits averaged about three thousand dollars a year; and it is thought that only Wythe, Pendleton, Patrick Henry, and perhaps two or three others enjoyed a larger income. Of his legal ability and acumen there can be no doubt, nor that he would have distinguished himself as judge or jurist, if he had preferred professional advancement to the public service. True it is that he was no orator, but then oratory was not often required in the Court Room. His voice, we are told, if raised much above conversational tones, "became husky and sank in his throat." Madison gave this as the reason why Jefferson never addressed speeches of more than a few sentences to popular legislative bodies; but he had heard him argue a case before a judge "fluently and well." Jefferson Randolph, anxious to learn about his grandfather's reputation at the Bar, once asked an old man who had often heard him in court, how he ranked as

<sup>1</sup> The maximum fees were fixed by a Virginian Statute at 500 pounds of tobacco in the Supreme or General Court and at 150 pounds in the county courts.



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a pleader. "Well," was the reply, "it is hard to tell, because he always took the right side."

Afterwards at Congress, and in the legislative assembly of Virginia, Jefferson came to share Washington's dislike of public oratory and consequently of the lawyers who infested public bodies. Long speeches, he said, usually came from lawyers, "whose trade it is to contest everything, concede nothing, and talk by the hour." In his eyes a Congressman, or Senator, who consumed public time by useless verbosity, deserved castigation as richly as if he were wasting public money. Whether in the service of the state or in retirement Jefferson felt that time was the most precious of all commodities. For that reason he practised punctuality, but confessed in his old age to Van Buren that (owing to the unpunctuality of others) this habit had proved unprofitable. Experience had taught him the truth of an Oxford epigram that "punctuality is the thief of time."

At twenty-six Jefferson was ready to take a hand in politics. Two years after his admission to the Bar, he was elected a member of the Virginian House of Burgesses to represent Albemarle county. Like George Washington, who had stood for Frederick county eleven years before, Jefferson kept open house and treated the free and independent electors to punch as freely as the customs of Colonial Virginia required. Soon after his election, on May 11, 1769, the Assembly was convened, and the new member was honoured with the task of drafting a "most humble and dutiful address" to Governor Botetourt, who had succeeded Fauquier. With the repeal of the Stamp Act the storm it provoked had blown over, and the new customs duties had not been much noticed in Virginia. The new governor was popular. He came in a State coach

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given him by the King, with six milk-white horses, and was received with royal honours. An ode on the occasion printed in the *Virginia Gazette* began:—

“Virginia see thy governor appears!  
The peaceful olive on his brow he wears!  
Sound the shrill trumpets, beat the rattling drums!  
From great Britannia’s isle his Lordship comes.”

The address drafted by Jefferson thanked him for his “very affectionate speech,” expressed “our firm attachment to his Majesty’s sacred person,” and assured him that any matters affecting the interests of Great Britain “shall ever be discussed on this ruling principle that her interests and ours are inseparably the same.” This draft, however, was not thought good enough, and Jefferson was mortified. At that time the esteem of the world, he confessed to Madison, was perhaps of higher value than anything else in it.

After two days of ceremony and interchange of compliments the newly elected Assembly proceeded to consider a circular letter from Massachusetts inviting her sister colonies to concert measures for resisting the Townshend duties.<sup>1</sup> On the third day four Resolutions were introduced. The first declared that there must be no taxation without representation; the second declared that the Colonies might co-operate for the redress of grievances; the third denounced the proposal to deport from the Colonies persons accused of treason for trial in Great Britain; and the fourth promised an Address on these matters to King George beseeching his Royal interposition.

These resolutions were passed almost unanimously, and the Speaker, Peyton Randolph, was instructed to send a

<sup>1</sup> On tea, glass, paper, etc., just introduced by Townshend in his 1767 budget.

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copy to all other legislative assemblies "on this continent." On the fifth day at noon Governor Botetourt commanded the House to attend in the Council Chamber and spoke as follows: "Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses: I have heard of your resolves and augur ill of their effects. You have made it my duty to dissolve you, and you are dissolved accordingly."

Thus after five days Jefferson's first parliament ceased to exist. But there had been time for him to suffer two reverses. His draft Address had not been accepted, and a Bill which he introduced to enable slave owners to manumit their slaves had been defeated.

Next day 88 out of 110 members met at the Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern, and an Association was formed by a group including George Washington, R. H. Lee, Patrick Henry, and Jefferson, pledging themselves and recommending their constituents not to buy certain articles of British merchandise so long as the Townshend duties remained in force. Thereupon, says Jefferson in his *Memoir*, they repaired to their several counties, and all the members were re-elected save "the very few who had declined assent to our proceedings."<sup>1</sup>

The list of articles banned shows what a valuable customer British merchants and manufacturers had in Virginia, and how much Virginia got in exchange for her tobacco. The list included

"pewter, hoes, axes, watches, clocks, tables, chairs, looking-glasses, carriages, cabinet work, upholstery, jewelry, plate and gold, silverware, ribbons, millinery, lace, India goods except spices, silks except sewing silk, cambric, lawn, muslin, calico, cotton or linen stuffs above 2s. per yard, woollens above 1s. 6d., broadcloths above 8s., narrow cloths above 3s., hats, stockings, shoes, boots, saddles, and all leather-work."

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Burk's *History of Virginia*, vol. III, p. 345.

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The signatories agreed further that they would never buy any article taxed by Britain to raise revenue in America excepting paper, which they could not either make or dispense with. They also decided to save all the lambs for wool, to be spun and woven at home.

Lord Botetourt, a sensible man, was impressed by these proceedings, and wrote accordingly home. Soon afterwards he again convened the Assembly and gave them the reassuring news that the British Government had decided to change its policy. His announcement was received with great joy. At a later date—when Lord North and the King revived the contention—Lord Botetourt indignantly asked to be recalled, but died before receiving permission to return. His statue, erected in front of the College, still stands, an eloquent proof of the high esteem in which he was held and continued to be held by the people after they had thrown down all the other statues and emblems of Royalty.

For the time being the tension was relaxed; for Lord North proposed and carried a Bill repealing the Customs tariff on American imports imposed by the Act of 1767, with the exception, fatal as it proved, of the tea duty, which was retained in order to assert the principle that parliament had a right to tax the Colonies. A lull followed. In Jefferson's words "nothing of particular excitement occurring for a considerable time, our countrymen seemed to fall into a state of insensibility to our situation."

Early in 1770 the family home at Shadwell was burnt to the ground. It was a hard blow for Jefferson. His favourite fiddle was saved; but most of his books and manuscripts were destroyed. In a letter to John Page, February 28, 1770, he says he had lost "every paper I had in the world and almost every book." He estimates the cost of

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books burned at £200 sterling. "Would to God it had been the money, *then* had it never cost me a sigh! To make the loss more sensible, it fell principally on my books of Common Law, of which I have but one left, at that time lent out. Of papers too of every kind I am utterly destitute. All of these, whether public or private, of business or of amusement, have perished in the flames."

As it happened one "pavilion" of the new home he was building on Monticello was just ready for occupation. "I have here," he wrote to another friend in the following February, "but one room." It served him for parlour, kitchen, hall, bedchamber, and study. He had another reason now for pressing on the construction; for he had fallen in love with a beautiful young widow, Martha Skelton. Her father, John Wayles, was a popular member of the bar with a fine estate near Williamsburg, called "The Forest." There Jefferson had often spent an evening and played duets with Martha, who shared his taste for music. During his courtship we find in his correspondence a curious letter ordering various luxuries from England to be paid for by a shipment of tobacco. In the course of this (June 1, 1771) Jefferson wrote:—

"I must alter one article in the invoice. I wrote therein for a Clavichord. I have since seen a Forte-piano and am charmed with it. Send me this instrument instead of the Clavichord: let the case be of fine mahogany, solid, not veneered, the compass from Double G to F in alt, and plenty of spare strings; and the workmanship of the whole very handsome and worthy of the acceptance of a lady for whom I intend it. I must add also  $\frac{1}{2}$  doz. pr. India cotton stockings for myself at 10/-sterl. pr pair,  $\frac{1}{2}$  doz. pr. best white silk do.; and a large umbrella with brass ribs, covered with green silk, and neatly finished. By this change of the Clavichord into a Forte-piano and addition of the other things, I shall be brought in debt to you, to discharge which I will ship you of the first tobacco I get to the warehouse in the fall."

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Jefferson and his lady were married on New Year's Day, 1772, by which time Monticello was ready to receive her. After the wedding festivities the happy pair left "The Forest" in a chaise for Monticello, a drive of more than a hundred miles. There had been a light fall of snow before they left, which increased in depth as they advanced up country. At last they had to quit the carriage and proceed on horseback. After pausing in Blenheim, eight miles from Monticello, they rode on at sunset. The snow lay eighteen inches deep on the mountain track. It was late at night when they arrived. The fires were out, and the negro servants had left to sleep in their cottages. But the bride and bridegroom were too happy to be troubled by darkness or cold. A bottle of wine was drawn out from behind a book shelf, and soon the silence of the night was broken by merry songs.

It is clear from Jefferson's correspondence that the Virginian Association to boycott British goods relaxed its measures after 1770, when all the Townshend customs duties except the tea duty were repealed. On February 20, 1771, for example, Jefferson writes from Monticello to a shipping agent consigning two hogsheads of tobacco for which he expects to get £100 sterling. The money, he says, is to be "laid out in the purchase of the articles on the back hereof. You will observe that part of these articles (such as are licensed by the association) are to be sent at any event. Another part (being prohibited) are only to be sent if the tea act should be repealed before you get home; if it is not, you will observe a third class to be sent instead of those prohibited. I am not without expectation that the repeal may take place. I believe the parliament want nothing but a colourable motive to adopt this measure." At this time Jefferson was replacing his lost books;

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he mentions two parcels costing nearly £90 sterling, which he is expecting from London. Another commission to his London agent does not suggest the stern republican simplicity of the future President: "One further favour and I am done; to search the Herald's office for the arms of my family. I have what I have been told were the family arms, but on what authority I know not. It is possible there may be none. If so, I would with your assistance become a purchaser, having Sterne's word for it that a coat of arms may be purchased as cheap as any other coat."

In the political lull of 1771 and 1773 Jefferson was busy with his practice in chambers at Williamsburg, and on circuit. In the General Court he pleaded (unsuccessfully) the case of an unfortunate youth who had been sold into slavery because he was the grandson of a mulatto woman. He also presented a learned argument on the question whether the churchwardens and vestrymen of a parish in Nansemond county could eject their parson for drunken and profligate conduct.<sup>1</sup> The times were not propitious to reformers. "During the regal Government nothing liberal could expect success," wrote Jefferson long afterwards in his autobiographical memoir. But the political clouds gathered again in 1773. Jefferson's first spell of happiness on his little mountain was soon to be broken. He had lavished much time and thought on the architecture of the house and on laying out the grounds. His garden book shows the interest he took in all that related to flowers and plants. From 1766 onwards, whenever he was at home, he jotted down with unflagging zest all the

<sup>1</sup> See collection of Law Reports (published in 1829) entitled *Reports of Cases Determined in the General Court of Virginia from 1730 to 1740 and from 1768 to 1772*.

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incidents of vegetable life from the appearance of the first leaf or blossom in the spring to the day when his wheat was ready for the sickle. In this and in the less romantic account book we find, as Sarah Randolph remarks, a precision and fondness for minute detail rare in one whose reflections on nature, life, and society were so extensive and profound. At Monticello he usually read and wrote in the morning, and spent the early hours of the afternoon on horseback. This was his favourite exercise. A bold and graceful rider, he kept only horses of the best blood of the Old Virginia stock. As a young man, we are told, he was exacting and fastidious. When his groom brought him his mount, he would pass a white cambric handkerchief over the horse's neck and send it back to the stable if any dust was left on the handkerchief.

To understand Jefferson aright we must think of him not only as a statesman, lawyer, diplomatist, philosopher, but also as an original architect, an ingenious mechanic, a scientific farmer, and a lover of nature whence he drew so much health and happiness, thus realizing the blessing promised by Rome's divine poet:—

“Fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agrestes  
Panaque Sylvanumque senem nymphasque sorores.”<sup>1</sup>

Everything now seemed to promise prosperity and happiness — a lovely and devoted wife, a fine estate, and an ample income of three thousand dollars from his practice and two thousand from his farms. On the death of Mr. Wayles in 1773 the estates were divided between his three daughters. Mrs. Jefferson's portion was about equal to her husband's patrimony; and would have made up for

<sup>1</sup> “Fortunate too is he who has known the rural deities, Pan and old Sylvanus and the sister nymphs.”



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the loss of his income from the law, if only peace had been preserved; if only war had not made havoc of the land.

In the same year a grievous blow fell upon Jefferson in the death of his dearest friend, Dabney Carr, whose promising career was cut short by fever in May, 1773. Carr had married Jefferson's fourth sister, Martha, eight years before. Their married felicity was described by Jefferson in a lively letter to Page, February 21, 1770:—

“This friend of ours, Page, in a very small house, with a table, half a dozen chairs, and one or two servants, is the happiest man in the universe. Every incident in life he so takes as to render it a source of pleasure. With as much benevolence as the heart of man will hold, but with an utter neglect of the costly apparatus of life, he exhibits to the world a new phenomenon in philosophy — the Samian sage in the tub of the cynic.”

Jefferson laid his friend beneath their favourite oak in what was to be the burial place of the Jefferson family, and is now visited by every pilgrim to the grounds of Monticello. He took his widowed sister and her young family, three sons and three daughters, into his own home and educated the children. This generosity was repaid by the most devoted affection and loyalty. One and all, says Randall, would gladly have laid down their lives for him.





*Painted by Reynolds*

## CHAPTER V

### THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF AMERICA

"By such management, by the irresistible operation of feeble councils, so paltry a sum as threepence in the eyes of a financier, so insignificant an article as tea in the eyes of a philosopher, have shaken the pillars of a commercial Empire that circled the whole globe."

— EDMUND BURKE on American Taxation, April 19, 1774

SINCE Edmund Burke no English writer of the first rank, with two brilliant exceptions, W. H. Lecky and Sir George Trevelyan, has studied the American side of the American Revolution. The architects who designed and built the Republic of the West; the master mariners who steered it through the storms and tempests of its infancy into unmolested security, have not attracted the attention of our biographers and historians. Macaulay, Carlyle, Froude, Morley, Bryce, and other masters of the craft, left that most momentous chapter of American history unadorned and almost untouched. Even the prosaic industry of Gardiner and the Archivists has abandoned these fields to American ploughmen. One English writer indeed in recent times threw up a cloud of glittering dust around the career of Alexander Hamilton. But this over-coloured portrait, painted in the heyday of commercial Imperialism by a disciple of Mr. Chamberlain, belongs to fiction rather than to history.

But if English men of letters have neglected the great age of American statesmanship, American authors have told and retold the story, so inglorious to the old Mon-

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archy, so glorious to the new Republic; so bitter to tyranny, so sweet to liberty. In these histories and biographies, and especially in some of the multitudinous text books prepared for the edification of American schools and Universities, a false note is too often struck. Too often the policy pursued by George the Third, Townshend, and Lord North towards the American Colonies is treated as a national policy representing the aims and inclinations of the English people. Englishmen have long ago acknowledged and repented the misdeeds of George the Third and his Ministers; but a vast majority of them at the time were unconsulted and had no vote or voice. Fifty years after a peace which acknowledged the independence of their American colonies they made an orderly revolution at home and threw off the yoke of oppression. They began to reform their parliament, their municipal government, their poor laws, their civil service, and their system of Colonial administration. They learned not only in the hard school of war and suffering, but also in the philosophic pages of Adam Smith and Bentham, the virtues of freedom and self-government. Unhappily the seeds of mischief, sown in a moment of corruption and imperial pride, brought forth for generations many harvests of ill will in America towards the English people, who were not at all responsible for the war and had no means of preventing it. In 1774 seven hundred voters in England and Wales elected 56 members of parliament, and 11,000 elected 254. Cornwall returned four times as many members as London and Middlesex. Manchester and many other large towns were totally unrepresented. In Scotland the elections were a farce. All the machinery of government was controlled either by the king and his ministers, or by the landed aristocracy and country gentlemen. Only

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in a handful of English boroughs and counties were there enough voters to secure the occasional election of a popular candidate.

In spite of the lies disseminated by a venal press, ministerial measures for the conciliation of America would have won general approval. The only complaint we can fairly level against the English people in 1774 and 1775 is that, uneducated and systematically misinformed, without arms, politically powerless, they were unripe for revolution. If the unenfranchised labourers and mechanics of Britain had neither strength nor spirit to fight for their own liberties, they at least refused to serve against those of America. They could not put down the Press gang, or prevent their rulers from hiring German mercenaries. George the Third dragged his ministers along the path of coercion not to please the people but to please himself. In February, 1775, Lord Camden thus summed up public opinion in England: "The landed interest is almost altogether anti-American, though the common people hold the war in abhorrence and the merchants and tradesmen for obvious reasons are likewise against it." Eighteen months earlier Benjamin Franklin, then agent of Massachusetts in London, had told Cushing, Speaker of the Massachusetts Assembly, that "America had many friends and well wishers" in England: "there seems to be, even among the country gentlemen, a growing sense of our importance, a disapprobation of the harsh measures with which we have been treated, and a wish that some means might be found of peaceful reconciliation." Had there been two Franklins, one to remain in London, the other to take the place of Samuel Adams in Boston, it is just possible that, in spite of George the Third, war and separation would have been postponed. In that, as in

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most cases, war postponed would have been war avoided ; for fifty years later, the Colonies would have been strong enough to achieve without risk of war, practical independence if not complete separation. But, resistance without rebellion, it must be conceded, would have entailed on our New Englanders a degree of patience and forbearance not to be expected of a high-spirited race which has often underestimated the value of peace, when weighed in the scales against politics or religion, and has always been more than a little too fond of fighting for its own sake. The same criticism may perhaps be applied to the English Parliamentary leaders who precipitated the war with Charles the First, and to the Administration of President Lincoln, especially in its handling of the Virginians in 1860. When we reflect on the cruelty and injustice, the sufferings of the innocent, the thousands and tens of thousands of good and brave men who perished, on the ruined homes and bankruptcies and pauperism, to say nothing of the moral depravity and political corruption left in their train by these three Civil Wars, we are reluctant to believe that the side which was manifestly in the right (and in each case after several years of bloodshed proved victorious) might not, with a little more patience, a little more statescraft, a little more of geniality and flexibility of temper in its leaders, have gained gradually by peaceful obstinacy and dogged perseverance what it achieved by the glittering hazards and splendid miseries of war. That the Americans in 1773 had a strong weapon short of war in their hands cannot be gainsaid. That weapon was the purchasing power of the Colonies. It had been employed successfully against the Stamp Act. What was the use of a Stamp Act, if the people would not buy the stamps? It had been employed again against the Townshend

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duties, and again with success, though the success was not quite complete, because George the Third insisted on retaining the tea duty as an emblem of British rule over the Colonies.

To British manufacturers, shipowners, and merchants the American trade meant much. Those Colonies took, before the boycott began, more than a quarter of the whole annual value of British exports, then computed at sixteen millions sterling. Their numbers and their wealth had more than doubled in twenty-five years — and no wonder; for the Colonies seemed a paradise to European workmen; and many besides the villagers of Sweet Auburn were ready to brave the horrors and perils of an Atlantic voyage in order to gain a country where industrious poverty was unknown, where carpenters and bricklayers got the equivalent of five shillings a day in English money, and where any enterprising labourer might by hard work and thrift become a prosperous freeholder.

The Colonial Associations had agreed not to import various classes of British goods, and so effective were their arrangements that in a single year the value of the banned imports fell from £1,300,000 to £400,000. As for the tea duty of threepence in the pound (retained by Lord North when the other Townshend duties were repealed), its net yield was only £300, though the continuance of the boycott, which its retention involved, cost Great Britain “at least five thousand times as much in trade alone, over and above the cost of naval and military preparations.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *The American Revolution* by Sir George Trevelyan, Part I, Chapters II and III. It was only by the casting vote of Lord North, given against his own judgment in obedience to the King's wishes, that the Grafton Cabinet in 1770 retained this trumpery duty on tea. Nothing is more certain in history than that King George the Third was the principal agent and contriver of the war which separated the English people from their Colonists in America.



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The East India Company, which was losing heavily by the Colonial embargo, begged for the repeal of the three-penny duty; but the King was resolved, as North said, "to try the question," and reduce his American subjects to submission. They on their part were now thoroughly roused, and were resolved not to submit on any terms to pay any duty levied by a British Parliament, even though by a complicated device it was arranged that dutiable tea should be cheaper than smuggled tea.

So the question was tried. Tea ships were despatched in the autumn of 1773 to the four chief American ports, Charleston, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. At Charleston the tea was stored in a damp vault, where it soon mouldered. The Philadelphians induced the captain to sail home without attempting to unload his cargo. From New York the tea ships were driven off by a timely gale. At Boston was enacted the drama, which caught, and has ever since held, the imagination of men. The Bostonians who threw the British tea into the harbour threw down at the same time a challenge to the spirit of imperial domination. The answer of King George and his docile ministers soon proved how strong that spirit was in the governing classes of the old country. The Power that had defeated France could not brook colonial independence. It might be unprofitable to tax the refractory New Englanders. But if they were refractory, it showed that they required chastisement; if they were unruly, they must be schooled into obedience. In spite of eloquent protests from Burke, Chatham, Shelburne, and other Whig leaders, Bills were passed to close the Port of Boston, to suppress town meetings in Massachusetts, and to transfer trial for various offences from Massachusetts to England or Nova Scotia. At the same time four

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regiments were despatched to restore order in the rebellious colony.

It has been observed that nearly all great revolutions have sprung from religious or economic grievances. Among nations of Latin, and especially of Spanish blood, they occur so often and effect so little that their causes seldom merit investigation. But in Anglo-Saxon countries neither society nor a system of government is easily overturned. The Norman Conquest, the Magna Charta, the Great Rebellion, the Glorious Revolution, American Independence, the Reform of 1832, are all political and social events of tremendous import in the wonderful story of our race. In every case the causes and consequences have a higher significance, a deeper seriousness, to the student of life and politics than the actual struggle — a war, an abdication, an execution, or the sudden surrender of an old established authority — which captivates the popular imagination. How many of those who have trembled with excitement over Marston Moor and Naseby ever read Clarendon's introductory chapters on the causes of the Great Rebellion, or ever puzzled their heads to discover the trains of thought and interest which drew Wentworth and Hyde, Hampden and Pym into opposing camps?

The American Revolution grew out of discontents in several colonies — and those discontents, at first distinct, led to the connection which ended in Union. Until the Stamp Act was imposed, North and South had little in common; it required ten years of interference and provocation to bring them, through correspondence, into combination and warlike union.

Virginia at the end of the colonial period stood first in population and wealth. It had over 500,000 inhabitants, Massachusetts about 350,000. The population of New

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York State could hardly have exceeded 250,000; that of Pennsylvania numbered about 300,000. These four leading colonies — Virginia, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania — differed in religion, manners, laws, and population. It is not for an Englishman to decide which colony sacrificed or contributed most to the making of an American Republic. Pennsylvania boasts its Franklin, Massachusetts its John and Samuel Adams, New York its Alexander Hamilton. But it will be conceded that no colonial band of revolutionary soldiers and statesmen, judges, writers, and orators can be found to compete with Virginia's sons — with George Washington, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Marshall. It will be conceded too that if Virginia had not come forward, Massachusetts must have submitted.

The strength of democratic sentiment in Virginia, and its decisive action at critical moments in the critical years from 1766 to 1799, are very striking, when we recall its prosperity as a colony, its dependence on British markets, and the long attachment of nearly all its richest families to the King, the aristocracy, and the traditions of England. Indeed as a state Virginia never recovered relatively to its northern neighbours the priority it had enjoyed as a colony; though thanks to Jefferson the Virginian Dynasty of Presidents lasted well into the nineteenth century.

John Randolph of Roanoke, Jefferson's brilliant and erratic kinsman, was fond of descanting in his old age on "the former prosperity of the Old Dominion, the extent and magnificence of the baronial establishments," as he called them, "especially on the James River and the Appomatox"; and the splendid hospitality of their proprietors. He used to contrast those halcyon days, the good old times, with the times in which he spoke — talking

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better, says Van Buren, on these themes "than I ever heard another man talk."<sup>1</sup> So far as a Colony with tobacco plantations, a large slave population, and an Indian frontier could resemble England under the Georges, Virginia resembled it. Its Assembly and its governor were a colonial copy of the English Parliament and the English King. The Colony had its large landowners, whose influence on society and administration had hitherto been almost undisputed. When Jefferson came of age, he was promptly appointed a Justice of the Peace for his county of Albemarle, just as a young squire would have been promoted on a like occasion to the County Bench in England. Looking back to the moment when Patrick Henry disturbed the established order by inflaming the religious and political grievances of the Non-Conformists and lower orders in Virginia, Jefferson remarked (August 5, 1815) on the insulation of Colonial Virginia. It had, he wrote, little intercourse either with Europe or its sister colonies. Certain families had risen to splendour by wealth; and their estates had been preserved, as in England, by entail. Some, like the Randolphs, had produced a series of talented men. Others had "stagnated on the grounds of their forefathers; for there was no emigration to the Westward in those days, the wild Irish, who had gotten possession of the valley between the Blue Ridge and North Mountain, forming a barrier over which none ventured to leap, and would still less venture to settle among." Thus until Jefferson grew to manhood society in Virginia remained stationary. It consisted, he says, of aristocrats, half-breeds, a solid independent yeomanry, "looking askance at those above, yet not venturing to jostle them,"

<sup>1</sup> See *Autobiography of Martin Van Buren*, p. 431; published by the American Historical Association, Washington, 1920.

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and 'last and lowest,' the abject and unprincipled class of overseers, 'always cap in hand to the Dons who employed them, and furnishing materials for the exercise of their pride, insolence, and spirit of domination.'

Standing alone these few sentences of Jefferson need modification or at least enlargement. They might be corrected from his own Notes on Virginia. But let us turn to a page from the Journal of an English officer who visited North America in 1764-1765, and spent a month in Virginia: —

"This province (Virginia) was the first settled of any on the Continent; it has always been a loyal one. The first settlers were many of them younger brothers of good families in England, who, for different motives, chose to quit home in search for better fortune. Their descendants, who possess the greatest land properties in the province, have intermixed, and have always had a much greater connection with, and dependence on, the mother-country than any other province, the nature of their situation being such, from the commodiousness and number of navigable rivers and creeks, that they may export to, and import from home, everything they raise or want, from within a few miles of their own houses, and cheaper than any neighbouring province could supply them. They have almost always lived in good harmony with their governors, and with one another; they each live at their own seats, and are seldom at Williamsburgh, but when the public business requires their attendance, or that their own private affairs call them there. Scarce any of the topping people have houses there of their own; but in the country they live on their estates handsomely and plentifully, raising all they require, and depending for nothing on the market. . . .

. . . "Upon the whole, was I in the case to live in America, this province, in point of company and climate, would be my choice in preference to any I have yet seen; the country in general is more cleared of wood, the houses are larger, better, and more commodious than those to the southward, their breed of horses extremely good, and in particular those they run in their carriages, which are mostly from thoroughbred horses and country mares; they all drive six horses, and travel generally from eight to nine miles an hour, going frequently sixty

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miles to dinner: you may conclude from this their roads are extremely good. They live in such good agreement that the ferries, which would retard in another country, rather accelerate their meeting here, for they assist one another, and all strangers, with their equipages, in so easy and kind a manner, as must deeply touch a person of any feeling, and convince them that in this country hospitality is everywhere practised.

"Their provisions of every kind are good; their rivers supply them with a variety of fish, particularly crabs and oysters; their pastures afford them excellent beef and mutton, and their woods are stocked with venison, game, and hogs; poultry is as good as in South Carolina; and their Madeira wine excellent, almost in every house; punch and small beer, brewed from molasses, is also in use — but their cider far exceeds any cider I ever tasted at home. It is genuine and unadulterated, and will keep good to the age of twelve years and more."

Compared with English town and country labourers the poor whites in Virginia were free and comfortable. But there was enough oppression to furnish complaints and enough luxury to furnish contrasts. George the Third and his ministers did all that was required to supply new grievances. Patrick Henry's orations had warmed and heated the discontent until it boiled over, first against the Parsons of the Established Church, then against the Stamp Act, and later as we shall see against the peace lovers and loyalists who shrank from warlike measures. What then was the part played by Virginia and by Jefferson at this crisis of American history?

During 1773, when fresh commotions arose in New England, Jefferson had stepped forward as one of the originators of the Committees of Correspondence. "The next event," to quote his memoir, "which excited our sympathies for Massachusetts was the Boston Port Bill by which the port was to be shut up on the first of June 1774." The news arrived while the Virginia Legislature was in session at Williamsburg. The lead in the House on these

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subjects being no longer left to the old members, Patrick Henry, R. H. Lee, Jefferson, and others ("agreeing that we must boldly take an unequivocal stand in the line with Massachusetts") consulted on what measures could be adopted for "arousing our people from the lethargy into which they had fallen, as to passing events." They decided that the appointment of a day of general fasting and prayer would be likely to serve this purpose. No such solemnity had been resorted to since their distress in the war of '55. "With the help, therefore, of Rushworth, whom we rummaged over for revolutionary precedents and forms, . . . we cooked up a resolution . . . for appointing the 1st day of June, on which the port bill was to commence, for a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, to implore Heaven to avert from us the evils of civil war, to inspire us with firmness in support of our rights, and to turn the hearts of the King and Parliament to moderation and justice." The group approached another member, Nicholas, "whose grave and religious character was more in unison with the tone of our resolution," and begged him to move it. He agreed.

"The first of June was proposed; and it passed without opposition, The Governor dissolved us, as usual. We retired to the Apollo, as before . . . and instructed the committee of correspondence to propose to the corresponding committees of the other colonies, to appoint deputies to meet in Congress at such place, *annually*, as should be convenient, to direct, from time to time, the measures required by the general interest: and we declared that an attack on any one colony, should be considered as an attack on the whole."

This was in May, 1774. They further recommended the several counties to elect deputies to meet at Williamsburg, August 1st, to consider the state of the colony, and to appoint delegates to a general Congress.

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This also was acceded to; Philadelphia was appointed for the place, and the 5th of September for the time of meeting:—

“We returned home, and . . . invited the clergy to meet assemblies of the people on the 1st of June, to perform the ceremonies of the day, and to address to them discourses suited to the occasion. The people met generally, with anxiety and alarm in their countenances, and the effect of the day, through the whole colony, was like a shock of electricity . . . They chose, universally, delegates for the convention. Being elected one for my own county, I prepared a draught of instructions to be given to the delegates whom we should send to the Congress. . . . In this I took the ground that, from the beginning, I had thought the only one orthodox or tenable, which was, that the relation between Great Britain and these colonies was exactly the same as that of England and Scotland, after the accession of James and until the union, and the same as her present relations with Hanover, having the same executive chief, but no other necessary political connection; and that our emigration from England to this country gave her no more rights over us, than the emigrations of the Danes and Saxons gave to the present authorities of the mother country, over England.”

In this doctrine, adds Jefferson, he had hitherto never been able to get any one to agree with him except George Wythe. “Our other patriots, Randolph, the Lees, Nicholas, Pendleton, stopped at the half-way house of John Dickinson, who admitted that England had a right to regulate our commerce, and to lay duties on it for the purposes of regulation, but not of raising revenue.”<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of July Jefferson started to attend the meeting at Williamsburg, but was taken ill on the road. He sent a copy of the Instructions he had drafted for the Virginia delegates to Peyton Randolph, Chairman of the Convention, who laid Jefferson's paper on the table for perusal. It was thought too bold at that stage to embody in the Instructions, but was approved by many of the

<sup>1</sup> The above quotations are from Jefferson's *Memoir*.



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members, who had it printed at Williamsburg as a pamphlet entitled "A Summary View of the Rights of British America, set forth in some Resolutions intended for the inspection of the present Delegates of the people of Virginia, now in Convention, by a native and Member of the House of Burgesses."<sup>1</sup> The pamphlet ran through several editions. It was reprinted in Philadelphia and afterwards (before the end of the year) in London.

Edmund Randolph tells us that Jefferson's draft instructions (reprinted in the pamphlet) were read to a large Company at the home of Peyton Randolph. Most of them were applauded, but not all:—

"From the celebrated letters of the Pennsylvanian Farmer [John Dickinson] we had been intrusted to bow to the external taxation of parliament, as resulting from our migration, and a necessary dependence on the mother country. But this composition of Mr. Jefferson shook this conceded principle, although it had been confirmed by a still more celebrated pamphlet of Daniel Dulaney of Maryland, and cited by Lord Chatham as a text book of American rights. The young ascended with Mr. Jefferson to the source of those rights; the old required time for consideration before they could tread this lofty ground, which, if it had not been abandoned, at least had not been fully occupied throughout America. From what cause it happened that the resolutions were not printed by order of the Convention does not appear; but as they were not adopted, several of the author's admirers subscribed for their publication. When the time of writing is remembered, a range of inquiry not then very frequent, and marching far beyond the politics of the day will surely be allowed them."<sup>2</sup>

The feeling of Jefferson's friends and supporters at this time appears in a Preface of the Editors, which runs:—

"The following piece was intended to convey to the late meeting of delegates the sentiments of one of their body, whose personal attend-

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the Williamsburg edition, corrected and annotated by Jefferson, is in the Library of Congress.

<sup>2</sup> See Edmund Randolph's *Ms. History of Virginia*, p. 25.

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ance was prevented by an accidental illness. In it the sources of our present unhappy differences are traced with such faithful accuracy, and the opinions entertained by every free American expressed with such a manly firmness, that it must be pleasing to the present, and may be useful to the future ages. It will evince to the world the moderation of our late convention, who have only touched with tenderness many of the claims insisted on in this pamphlet, though every heart acknowledged their justice."

Their object no doubt in issuing the pamphlet was to rest the American case on firmer constitutional ground, from which the claim of the American colonies to be free states within the British Empire could be logically defended. At that time even George Washington — as appears from the Resolutions of the meeting in Fairfax County, Virginia, over which he presided — still acknowledged the right of the British Parliament "directed with wisdom and moderation" to regulate American commerce.

Jefferson's piece deserves notice, not only as his first publication, but also for the influence it exerted on the political mind of America, then halting between two opinions and groping, as it were, for a philosophical argument in defence of an autonomy which would exclude interference from London.

In the first paragraph the Virginian Deputies, on meeting "in general congress" the Deputies "from the other states of British America," are instructed to propose "an humble and dutiful address" to King George, "to lay before him, as Chief Magistrate of the British Empire, the united complaints of his Majesty's subjects in America."

The address is further "to represent to his Majesty that these his States have often individually made humble application to his imperial Throne, to obtain, through its intervention, some redress of their injured rights; to none

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of which, was ever even an answer condescended." They humbly hope that this joint address, "penned in the language of truth, and divested of those expressions of servility which would persuade his Majesty that we are asking favours, and not rights," will obtain from his Majesty a more respectful acceptance.

The King is reminded "that he is no more than the chief officer of the people, appointed by the laws and circumscribed with definite powers, to assist in working the great machine of government, erected for their use, and consequently, subject to their superintendence."

Jefferson then proceeds to develop the historical theory on which Congress should base its claims in negotiating with Britain. His argument will be presented here, as nearly as space permits, in his own language:—

Our Ancestors, before their emigration to America, were the free inhabitants of the British Dominions in Europe. They exercised the right given by nature to all men of departing from the country in which chance, not choice, had placed them, in quest of new habitations, and of there establishing new societies under such laws as would promote public happiness. In like manner their Saxon ancestors had left their native wilds and woods in Northern Europe to possess themselves of England, and had there established the system of laws which has so long been its glory and protection. America was conquered, and the settlements established, by the emigrants themselves at the expense of their own blood and fortunes. What they won they alone have a right to hold. In later times, after the Colonies had become firmly established and commercially valuable, Parliament was pleased to lend them assistance against the French and the Indians. The aids granted were doubtless valuable, but they give no title to the authority now arrogated by Parliament, and may be amply repaid by such exclusive privileges in trade as may advantage them without being too restrictive to ourselves.

After effecting their settlements in the wilds of America the emigrants adopted the laws under which they had lived in the Mother Country, and continued their union with her by submitting themselves

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to the same common sovereign, who thereby became a central link connecting the several parts of the Empire. Thus removed from oppression they were not long permitted to hold undisturbed the rights they had acquired so dearly. The Stuart Kings, whose treasonable crimes against their people were afterwards punished parted out the new country and distributed it among royal favourites.

Under the first Stuarts Virginia was prohibited from its natural right to enjoy free trade with all parts of the world; but in 1651 a solemn treaty, entered into by the British Commonwealth and the Colony of Virginia, expressly stipulated that the Virginians should enjoy 'free trade as the people of England do enjoy, to all places and with all nations, according to the laws of this Commonwealth.' On the restoration of King Charles II free commerce once more fell a victim to arbitrary power; and in succeeding reigns the colonial trade was again laid under such restrictions as showed how little justice could be hoped from a British Parliament, if the States were to admit its uncontrolled authority. That bodies of men may act tyrannically is proved by the existing regulations of American commerce; for Parliament, besides imposing duties on American imports and exports, has prohibited our going to any markets north of Cape Finisterre either to buy or sell. All our tobacco, including the surplus which the British do not consume, must be sold to British merchants to be reshipped and disposed of in foreign markets at a much higher price than we receive. By one act of George the Second's reign American subjects are forbidden to manufacture a hat out of American fur; by another they are forbidden to manufacture machinery out of American iron. Experience thus confirms the principle that the colonies ought to be exempt from the jurisdiction of the British parliament. But the true ground for declaring these Acts void is that Parliament has no right to exercise authority over us.

To show that these exercises of usurped power had been much aggravated since George the Third mounted the throne, Jefferson recites the Stamp Duties and Tea Duties, "An Act for the better securing the dependency of His Majesty's Dominions in America upon the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain," and worst of all the special Acts aimed against New York and Boston. The first of

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these was entitled: "an Act for suspending the Legislature of New York." Surely a manifest absurdity:—

One free and independent legislature, hereby takes upon itself to suspend the powers of another, free and independent as itself. . . . Not only the principles of common sense, but the common feelings of human nature must be surrendered up, before His Majesty's subjects here, can be persuaded to believe that they hold their political existence at the will of a British Parliament. . . . Can any one reason be assigned why one hundred and sixty thousand electors in the island of Great Britain, should give law to four millions in the States of America, every individual of whom, is equal to every individual of them in virtue, in understanding, and in bodily strength? Were this to be admitted instead of being a free people, as we have hitherto supposed, and mean to continue ourselves, we should suddenly be found the slaves, not of one, but of one hundred and sixty thousand tyrants.

By another Act to discontinue the shipping of Boston, passed in the last session of parliament, a large and populous town had been deprived of its trade and involved in utter ruin. On principles of justice that Act could not be defended. Only in Massachusetts were the protests of the people disregarded. The situation was extraordinary; the people were naturally exasperated. A number of them assembled in Boston, threw the tea into the ocean, and dispersed without any further active violence. If in this they did wrong, they were amenable to the laws of the land. But they were now devoted to ruin by that unseen hand which governs the momentous affairs of this empire. On the partial representations of a few worthless ministerial dependants, who hoped by their treacheries to win the dignity of British knighthood, an ancient and wealthy town had been reduced from opulence to beggary. Men who spent their lives in extending British commerce, and had invested their savings in Boston, found themselves thrown on charity for subsistence. Not one in a hundred of the inhabitants had been concerned in the act complained of; yet all were involved in one indiscriminate ruin.

With equal severity Jefferson condemned the recent Acts providing that Americans accused of certain offences might be transferred to Great Britain for trial, thus depriving them of a jury of their neighbours, the privilege

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granted to all Englishmen by Magna Charta, and removing the accused from the place where alone full evidence could be obtained:—

“These are the acts of power, assumed by a body of men foreign to our constitutions, and unacknowledged by our laws; against which we do, on behalf of the inhabitants of British America, enter this, our solemn and determined protest. And we do earnestly entreat his Majesty, as yet the only mediatory power between the several states of the British empire, to recommend to his Parliament of Great Britain, the total revocation of these acts.”

From the legislative oppressions of Parliament Jefferson proceeds still more boldly to consider the executive conduct of the King and to “mark out his deviations from the line of duty”:—

In Great Britain the King’s original power of refusing assent to Bills passed by both Houses of the Legislature had lapsed through disuse. But the addition of new States to the Empire had led to a resumption of the royal veto for the legitimate purpose of preventing the passage of laws by one legislature which might injure another state of the Empire:—

“Yet this will not excuse the wanton exercise of this power, which we have seen His Majesty practise on the laws of the American legislatures. For the most trifling reasons, and, sometimes, for no conceivable reason at all, his Majesty has rejected laws of the most salutary tendency. The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those colonies, where it was, unhappily, introduced in their infant state. But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa. Yet our repeated attempts to effect this, by prohibitions, and by imposing duties which might amount to a prohibition, have been hitherto defeated by His Majesty’s negative.<sup>1</sup> . . .

“With equal inattention to the necessities of his people here, has His Majesty permitted our laws to lie neglected in England, for years,

<sup>1</sup> The passage about slavery may explain why Jefferson’s draft was not liked by all the Virginian delegates!

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neither confirming them by his assent, nor annulling them by his negative: so, that such of them as have no suspending clause, we hold on the most precarious of all tenures, His Majesty's will. To render this grievance still more oppressive, the King has laid down such instructions for his governors that they can pass no law of any moment unless it have such suspending clause; so that, however immediate may be the call for legislative interposition, the law cannot be executed, till it has twice crossed the Atlantic, by which time the evil may have spent its whole force."

One of the King's recent instructions had struck at the root of representative institutions in Virginia; for the Governor had been forbidden to assent to any law for the constitution of a county, unless the new county would consent to forego representation in the Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

In the reign of Richard the Second — so Jefferson's argument proceeds — Tresilian and other judges were impeached and executed as traitors for advising the king that he might dissolve Parliament at any time. Later kings indeed had exercised that power; but since the Glorious Revolution it had been abandoned.<sup>2</sup> How different was the practice of the king's governors in America, where legislative bodies had been dissolved for asserting the rights of their constituents against foreign usurpations. If they had corruptly sold those rights, as in Britain, then their continuance in office would have become dangerous to the State. Such being the causes for which a representative body should and should not be dissolved, was it not strange that the British parliament had not been dissolved by the King, while the Colonial Assemblies had been repeatedly dissolved by their Governors?

But the King, and his Governors, had carried this power beyond any limit known to the laws; for after dissolving

<sup>1</sup> Virginia had then no boundary to the westward.

<sup>2</sup> In an Ms, note Jefferson excepts the Dissolutions of 1698, 1700, and 1701,

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one House of Representatives they had refused to call another, so that for long periods the lawful legislature had been non-existent. Human nature revolts against the supposition of a state unable to provide in emergencies against danger or ruin. When therefore the representative bodies, to whom power has been delegated, are dissolved, power reverts to the people, who may exercise it to an unlimited extent by assembling or appointing deputies, or in any way they may think fit; and should the American people under such circumstances take upon them to discontinue their connection with the British Empire, "none will be so bold as to decide against the right or the efficacy of such avulsion."

Another recent grievance of Virginia is noted in the royal claim to grant unsettled lands in the Colonies, as though those lands belonged to the crown, whereas they belong by "the nature and purpose of civil institutions" to the society in whose territory they lie.

Lastly, to enforce the arbitrary measures here set out and complained of, the king had from time to time sent armed forces, not raised in America or by the authority of American laws. If he possessed such a right it might swallow up all the rights of the Colonies. "But his Majesty has no right to land a single armed man on our shores, and those whom he sends here are liable to our laws made for the suppression and punishment of riots and unlawful assemblies; or are hostile bodies invading us in defiance of our laws." Every state must judge for itself what should be the number of its armed forces, of whom they are to consist, and under what restrictions they are to be laid.

The case for the Colonies against parliament and king is now concluded. Only the summing up remains:—



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"These are our grievances, which we have thus laid before his Majesty, with that freedom of language and sentiment which becomes a free people, claiming their rights as derived from the laws of nature, and not as the gift of their chief magistrate. Let those flatter who fear — it is not an American art. To give praise where it is not due, . . . would ill beseem those who are asserting the rights of human nature. They know, and will, therefore, say that kings are the servants, not the proprietors of the people. Open your breast, Sire, to liberal and expanded thought. Let not the name of George the Third be a blot on the page of history. You are surrounded by British counsellors, but remember that they are parties. . . . It behoves you, therefore, to think and to act for yourself and your people. The great principles of right and wrong are legible to every reader; to pursue them, requires not the aid of many counsellors. . . . No longer persevere in sacrificing the rights of one part of the empire, to the inordinate desires of another; but deal out to all equal and impartial right. . . . This is the important post in which fortune has placed you, holding the balance of a great, if a well poised empire. This, Sire, is the advice of your great American council, on the observance of which may perhaps depend your felicity and future fame, and the preservation of that harmony which alone can continue, both to Great Britain and America, the reciprocal advantages of their connection. It is neither our wish nor our interest to separate from her. We are willing, on our part, to sacrifice every thing which reason can ask, to the restoration of that tranquillity for which all must wish. On their part, let them be ready to establish union on a generous plan. Let them name their terms, but let them be just. Accept of every commercial preference it is in our power to give, for such things as we can raise for their use, or they make for ours. But let them not think to exclude us from going to other markets, to dispose of those commodities which they cannot use, nor to supply those wants which they cannot supply. Still less let it be proposed that our properties, within our own territories, shall be taxed or regulated by any power on earth, but our own. The God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time: the hand of force may destroy, but cannot disjoin them. This, Sire, is our last, our determined resolution. And that you will be pleased to interpose . . . to procure redress of these our great grievances, to quiet the minds of your subjects in British America, against any apprehensions of future encroachment, to establish fraternal love and harmony through the whole empire, and that that may

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continue to the latest ages of time, is the fervent prayer of all British America."

Thus did Thomas Jefferson lay the axe of political freedom at the root of arbitrary power and imperial domination. It is the essay of a full-blown philosophic radical, who strips loyalty and royalty of all mystic properties, and makes political authority depend for justification upon its utility to the governed and upon their consent.

There is no divine right, no halo round the crown, to obstruct the young Virginian's political vision. King George is a chief magistrate who derives his power from the people, and must exercise it for their benefit and in dependence upon their will. This trumpet note of warning and defiance to an obstinate and arbitrary monarch, a servile Ministry, and a most corrupt parliament, was the forerunner of Paine's *Common Sense* and of the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson was now a marked man. His pamphlet, as we have seen, speedily found its way to London, where, says the author, in his *Memoir*:—

"It was taken up by the Opposition, interpolated a little by Mr. Burke so as to make it answer opposition purposes, and in that form ran rapidly through several editions. This information I had from Parson Hurt, who happened at the time to be in London; . . . and I was informed afterwards by Peyton Randolph that it had procured me the honor of having my name inserted in a long list of proscriptions, enrolled in a bill of attainder, . . . but suppressed in embryo by the hasty step of events, which warned them to be a little cautious. Montague, agent of the House of Burgesses in England, made extracts from the bill, copied their names, and sent them to Peyton Randolph. The names I think were about twenty, which he repeated to me, but I recollect those only of Hancock, the two Adamses, Peyton Randolph himself, Patrick Henry and myself."

The Virginia Convention met on August 1, and adopted (wisely as Jefferson afterwards thought) <sup>1</sup> a much

<sup>1</sup> See Jefferson's *Memoir*, Note C.

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milder set of instructions for the Virginian Delegates (Peyton Randolph, R. H. Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton), who shortly afterwards proceeded to Philadelphia. There on September 5 in the Carpenters Hall they met delegates from all the Colonies except Georgia, and constituted what is known as the first Continental Congress. The Delegates were desired on behalf of Virginia to express their true allegiance to His Majesty "our lawful and rightful sovereign," and to declare that "we are determined with our lives and fortunes to support him in the legal exercise of all his just rights and prerogatives." They also approved of a constitutional connection with Great Britain, and desired "a return to that intercourse of affection and commercial connection that formerly united both countries." But grievances must be removed and American rights restored. They had acquiesced in the Navigation Acts and other British restrictions of American commerce; but these were an ample recompense for British protection. They would not acquiesce in the claim of parliament and the Crown to interfere with their revenues, jurisdictions, and internal policy. "To obtain redress of these grievances, without which the people of America can neither be safe, free, nor happy," they were willing to undergo the great inconvenience of stopping all imports from Britain after November 1, 1774, and also to cease exporting any commodity whatsoever to Britain after August 10, 1775.

An earlier adoption of the non-intercourse plan would have involved the colony in too heavy a loss on its tobacco crop; but otherwise the Virginia Delegates were instructed to co-operate with the sister colonies in General Congress for the accomplishment of the common purpose.

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This first Congress, presided over by Peyton Randolph, adjourned in October after resolving to meet again in May. In the eyes of George the Third and his Ministers it was an illegal body. The great majority of its members agreed with the Instructions adopted by Virginia. Though they were resolved to resist British encroachments upon their rights and liberties, separation was as far from their thoughts as war from their wishes. In this very month of October, 1774, Washington said: "I am well satisfied that no such thing as independence is desired by any thinking man in all North America; on the contrary, that it is the ardent wish of the warmest advocates for liberty that peace and tranquillity on constitutional grounds will be restored, and the horrors of civil discord prevented." Dr. Edward Channing, the learned American historian, thinks there were probably "not a dozen men in all the Colonies at that time who wished for independence," and adds: "had there been [instead of General Gage] a strong, wise, and prudent man at the head of affairs at Boston, the rupture might have been postponed for many years."

The First Continental Congress adopted a mild declaration of rights; but it also passed an agreement to boycott British trade, and recommended all the Colonies to appoint local committees to enforce the non-intercourse policy, by which it was hoped parliament and the king would be brought to their senses. In this hope they were disappointed; for the new parliament elected at the end of the year, though less venal and servile than its predecessor, was yet sufficiently under the control of the king and Lord North to persist in the insensate policy of coercion. But the First Congress, if it failed to change the king's policy, achieved a striking success in organising a

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continental boycott. Its measures to prevent the importation and consumption of British goods were carried out with surprising promptitude in all the colonies, and in none more completely than in Virginia. The merchants of Virginia indeed, to whom non-intercourse meant ruin, were of course by interest and inclination as much opposed to economic war as those of Philadelphia, New York, and New England. But the planters, even in the tidewater counties, supported almost unanimously a measure which promised to achieve once more the bloodless victory which had attended similar resistance to the Stamp Act eight years before. Their leaders, trained in affairs, conversant in politics and law, drew from the pages of Harrington, Sidney, and Locke, notions of self-government and constitutional right which would have startled their cavalier ancestors. The Committees of Virginia were so active,<sup>1</sup> vigilant, and intolerant towards recusants that those who hesitated between King and Congress soon had no alternative but exile or submission. A few Virginian notables like John Randolph, brother of Peyton, were to choose the former course. But when war broke out, Virginia, thanks to its planter statesmen, suffered less from disaffection to the American cause than any of the leading colonies. In all its counties the boycott was acclaimed with zeal and enforced with rigour. Committeemen rode about inspecting books and ledgers of merchants. The raising of prices was strictly forbidden. Tea had become so detestable a beverage that some enthusiasts brought their unconsumed stores to the Court House to be publicly burned, "in which reasonable request," wrote the *Virginia Gazette*, "they were instantly gratified." Persons dealing with recalcitrant merchants were declared "Ene-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *The Revolution in Virginia*, by H. J. Eckenrode, Chapter IV.

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mies to American Liberty.” Condemned goods were sold at auction in aid of the Boston sufferers. The names of ship captains and others who violated the non-importation agreement were published. A letter from Jefferson to Col. A. Carey of December 9, 1774, bears witness to the severity of the boycott. It asks Carey to communicate to his county committee the fact that fourteen pairs of sash windows, ordered from England before these stringent measures had been thought of, were about to arrive at one of their coast towns. As glass had been prohibited by the Continental Association, “which without the spirit of prophecy could not have been foretold when I ordered them, so I mean they shall be subject to its condemnation. To your committee therefore, if landed within their county, I submit the disposal of them.”

## CHAPTER VI

### THE REPLIES TO LORD NORTH — WAR BEGINS — 1775

“ ’Tis very true, my sov’reign King,  
My skill may weel be doubted;  
But facts are chiels that winna ding  
An’ downa be disputed:  
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,  
Is e’en right reft an’ clouted,  
And now the third part of the string,  
An’ less, will gang about it  
Than did ae day.”

— BURNS’ *Dream* (1786).

THE storm which had gathered so fast in 1774 broke in 1775. In January, Albemarle county elected its Committee of Safety, fifteen members, with Jefferson at the head of the poll. He was also one of his county’s two representatives in the Second Virginia Convention, which met at Richmond on March 20. Richmond, less exposed than Williamsburg to the British navy, and soon to succeed it as the seat of government, was then only a village. For lack of a public hall the delegates met in the little wooden church of St. John’s, which had enough pews to accommodate what was really a meeting of the House of Burgesses acting alone without Governor or Council.

Though the people of Massachusetts were preparing armed resistance to Gage, war had not yet begun; and in Virginia many people believed that the commercial boy-

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cott, now in effective operation, would before long induce a change in British policy. When the Convention met at Richmond, it soon appeared that opinion was very evenly divided between the Conservatives who, still hoping to avoid a rupture, were opposed to warlike measures, and the so-called "progressives" or "patriots," who thought that military preparations ought to be undertaken at once.

The Conservatives, mostly elderly men of substance, included a few Tories or Loyalists. But what distinguished them from the more fiery patriots was their reluctance to abandon hope of peace. They were for the most part only a few months or a few weeks behind Patrick Henry, R. H. Lee, and Jefferson. It is difficult to blame them for refusing to despair of conciliation, seeing that American rights had at Westminster such champions as Chatham, Rockingham, Shelburne, and Burke, supported by the Whig party (weakened though it was by factions and secessions), by the Dissenters, and by the commercial classes of England. At their instance the Convention began by declaring "that it is the most ardent wish of this colony (and they are persuaded of the whole continent of North America) to see a speedy return to those halcyon days when we lived a free and happy people."

Thereupon Patrick Henry sprang to his feet, and proposed that a committee be appointed to raise a force for the protection of the country. His speech thrilled the assembly and resounded like a trumpet blast over the Continent. Different accounts of it have been handed down. But we know that it was a frenzied appeal to the most easily roused of all human passions. "We must fight" was the burden of every period, until at last he came to the peroration which every American school boy has by heart:—



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"Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me give me liberty or give me death!"

A clergyman, recalling his emotions long afterwards, said that the speech left him "sick with excitement." The visitor standing on the spot, while the cicerone recites a version of Patrick Henry's words, may reconstruct the scene — the tiny church, the high pews, the dim light, the small crowded congregation swayed by conflicting passions, cheering and countercheering, as they listened to this debate, but spellbound at last by the magic eloquence of their countryman.

Edmund Randolph, who was present, mentions that Jefferson "argued closely, profoundly and warmly on the same side." But Patrick Henry's "arming Resolutions," supported by Lee, Jefferson, and Washington, the last named "prominent though silent," were only carried by 65 to 60 votes, a sufficient proof that the elected representatives of Virginia, divided between caution and courage, were not to be carried off their feet by a tempest of rhetoric. In truth they might well halt between two opinions. New England was arming; but fighting had not begun in Massachusetts. Patrick Henry, it seems, would have gone further and broken openly with England by adopting a constitution and ousting the Governor. Neither the Convention nor the people were ready for such a step. A committee, which included Henry, Washington, Jefferson, and Pendleton, was appointed. They prepared a plan for arming and disciplining the militia. The Convention after adopting it adjourned. Lord Dunmore, who still remained in the Governor's palace at Williamsburg, though impotent to arrest the progress of revolu-

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tionary sentiment and organization, had intimated that he expected conciliatory propositions from England, and would shortly summon a meeting of the House of Burgesses to consider them. Such a meeting would clash with the Congress at Philadelphia. As Peyton Randolph, one of the Virginia delegates to Congress, was Speaker, and as his presence would probably be required at Williamsburg, the Richmond Convention appointed Jefferson in that event to serve in his stead on the Virginia delegation at Philadelphia.

In the very next month war broke out in Massachusetts. General Gage sent out a body of troops on the night of April 18 to seize war stores at Concord. At the village of Lexington they met with opposition, and the first blood was shed on the morning of April 19. On their way back next day the detachment was attacked by the local militia, or "minute men," as they were called. The British troops retreated with loss to the lines at Charlestown, and thereupon a siege of Boston was begun by the Colonists. The following day acting under Lord Dunmore's orders a detachment of marines carried off fifteen barrels of gunpowder from the Powder Horn at Williamsburg and lodged them in a British schooner. This incident inflamed popular feeling throughout Virginia, which blazed up a few days later when news came of the battle of Lexington. The "gentlemen volunteers" of Albemarle county mustered at Charlottesville within sight of Monticello, and sent a communication to Colonel George Washington, offering to march on Williamsburg and compel the Governor to return the powder to the public magazine. Patrick Henry actually set out for Williamsburg at the head of the Hanover county volunteers, but was pacified by one of Dunmore's

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officers, who handed over £330 to replace the gunpowder abstracted.<sup>1</sup>

On June 1 Dunmore convened the House of Burgesses to hear Lord North's Conciliatory Propositions and to urge the reopening of the Courts. It was six weeks after the fight at Lexington, and General Gage was still blockaded in Boston by a large army of New Englanders. But many leading Virginians were unwilling to snap the tie with England,<sup>2</sup> and the whole revolutionary convention, including Patrick Henry, met on the day appointed in Williamsburg. They even went over and ratified their own proceedings at the Convention; but they refused to reopen the Courts, though they re-enacted the schedule of fees.

Lord North's Conciliatory Propositions furnished important matter for consideration, as the reply of Virginia would be certain to carry great weight throughout the Colonies. A few months before, these belated proposals might conceivably have formed the basis of at least a temporary settlement. But since the subversion of the Massachusetts charter, and the treatment of Boston, the minimum demands of the American patriots had risen much higher than ever before. They were bent on a settlement, which would exclude the possibility of future encroachments by Parliament or the Crown on Colonial self-government and self-taxation. In February, Parliament had voted by 296 to 106 an address pledging itself to support the government in crushing American resistance. Lord Chatham's conciliatory Bill (whose adop-

<sup>1</sup> In August the Convention at Richmond decided that £112,10.0 would pay for the gunpowder, and ordered the residue to be returned to the Receiver General of the Colony.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Notes on Virginia* (1784) Jefferson wrote: "It is well known that in July, 1775 a separation from Great Britain and establishment of republican government had never yet entered into any person's mind."

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tion would almost certainly have brought about peace) had been rejected early in February in the Lords, and Burke's later Resolutions (in March) had been defeated in the Commons by 270 to 78. Lord North, however, much to the surprise and (at first) to the indignation of the king's friends, had himself on February 20 introduced a conciliatory resolution exempting from taxation any colony which would of its own accord make such contribution to Imperial defence, and such fixed provision for its governor and judges, as met with the approval of Parliament.

To this proposal, which reached the Colonial governors in May, it was now necessary for the Virginian burgesses to reply. Peyton Randolph, their Speaker, knowing beforehand, as Jefferson tells us in his Memoir, the tenor of these propositions "was anxious that the answer of our assembly, likely to be the first, should harmonize with what he knew to be the sentiments and wishes of the body [*i.e.* the Congress at Philadelphia] he had recently left. He feared that Mr. Nicholas, whose mind was not yet up to the mark of the times, would undertake the answer, and therefore pressed me to prepare an answer. I did so, and with his aid carried it through the house with long and doubtful scruples from Mr. Nicholas and James Mercer, and a dash of cold water on it here and there, enfeebling it somewhat, but finally with unanimity or a vote approaching it."

On May 7, three weeks before the meeting of the burgesses, Jefferson had written a letter to his old friend William Small, now in England, to whom at William and Mary College he had owed so much. He had then just heard of the affair at Lexington. "This accident," he feared, "has cut off our last hope of reconciliation, and a

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phrenzy of revenge seems to have seized all ranks of people." Instead of intimidating it had provoked, and the measure of irritation had been filled up by proscription of individuals, as impotent as it was inflammatory: "When I saw Lord Chatham's Bill," he went on, "I entertained high hope that a reconciliation could have been brought about. The difference between his terms, and those offered by our Congress, might have been accommodated, if entered on by both parties with a disposition to accommodate. But the dignity of Parliament, it seems, can brook no opposition to its power. Strange that a set of men, who have made sale of their virtue to the Minister, should yet talk of retaining dignity! But I am getting into politics, though I sat down only to ask your acceptance of the wine, and express my constant wishes for your happiness."

This view of Lord Chatham's Bill is developed in the "Address to Lord Dunmore from the House of Representatives" drafted by Jefferson at Peyton Randolph's request and adopted by the House of Burgesses on June 12. The language of the Address is respectful and conciliatory, though the substance of it is firm enough. "His Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Burgesses of Virginia," wishing nothing so sincerely as the continuance of brotherly love with "our fellow subjects of Great Britain" were pleased to hear of a "benevolent tender" towards "ending our unhappy disputes with the Mother Country." But after minutely considering the Resolution passed by Parliament, they declared with pain and disappointment that "it only changes the form of oppression without lightening the burden." The reasons for this conclusion were (in a brief and condensed form) as follows:—

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1. The British Parliament has no right to intermeddle with the support of civil government in the Colonies. For us not for them has government been instituted here.

2. To secure exemption from unjust taxation we must saddle ourselves with a perpetual tax adequate to the expectations and subject to the disposal of Parliament: whereas we have a right to give our money, as Parliament gives theirs, without coercion, according to our own judgment.

3. In return for a grant of money Parliament does not offer to repeal its Acts restraining Colonial trade, altering colonial constitutions depriving us of trial by jury, and maintaining standing armies in America.

4. At the very time of requiring grants of money they are preparing large armaments to invade us "which is a style of asking gifts not reconcilable to our freedom."

5. On our agreeing to contribute towards the common defence they do not propose to allow us free trade with the world: whereas to us it appears just that those who bear equally the burden of government should participate equally of its benefits. It is not fair that Great Britain should retain the monopoly of Colonial trade while exacting a contribution from the Colonies to imperial defence.

6. Virginia is now represented in General Congress with the other colonies, and we are bound in honour as well as interest to share their fate. We should hold ourselves base deserters of the Union were we to make terms apart from them.

The address then referred to Lord Chatham's plan of accommodation "which, though not entirely equal to the terms we had a right to ask, yet differed but in few points from what the General Congress had held out." Had Parliament been so disposed "Lord Chatham's Bill, on the one part, and the terms of Congress on the other, would have formed a basis for negotiations, which a spirit of accommodation on both sides might, perhaps, have reconciled." It came recommended, too, from one who had shown the world that Great Britain, with her Colonies united firmly under a just and honest Government,

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formed a power which might bid defiance to the most potent enemies. But Chatham was no longer in power and Parliament had rejected his Bill. Such were the sentiments of Virginia's representatives. Final determination they left "to the General Congress, now sitting, before whom we shall lay the papers your Lordship has communicated to us. For ourselves, we have exhausted every mode of application which our invention could suggest as proper and promising." They concluded with a prayer for divine guidance and a fervent hope that through the wise endeavours of the Congress "we may again see reunited the blessings of liberty, prosperity, and harmony with Great Britain."

So ended the reply to Lord Dunmore. Feeling against the Governor ran high. One of the burgesses even proposed that he should be hanged. A force of riflemen, called "shirtmen" on account of their long hunting frocks, arrived in the capital. Dunmore took refuge with his family on the *Fowey*, a British ship which lay off Yorktown. On June 21 the Burgesses sent a protest to the Governor complaining of his absence, and adjourned. It was the last meeting of the Colonial Assembly, though one or two other attempts were made later on to convene it.

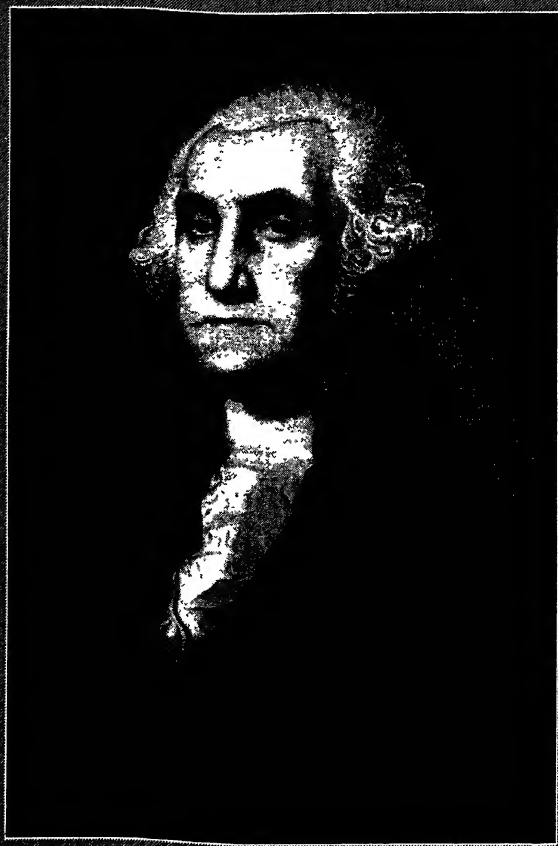
Meanwhile, on June 11, Jefferson, having accomplished this important task at home, left to join his fellow delegates <sup>1</sup> at Philadelphia, where the Second Continental Congress was now in session. His journey (through Maryland) <sup>2</sup> took ten days, though he drove in a phaeton with

<sup>1</sup> A strong contingent; Washington, Patrick Henry, R. H. Lee, Pendleton, Harrison, and Bland.

<sup>2</sup> In Maryland he noted that the true difference of exchange between the currencies of Maryland and Virginia was 100 to 125. The pistareen of Maryland was equivalent to  $\frac{1}{4}$ d., the dollar to 7/6d., and the half jo to £3.







• Painted by Stuart

## The Replies to Lord North

two spare horses. From Philadelphia on June 26, he wrote to his brother-in-law, Francis Eppes, with news of Bunker Hill — “an action at the outlet of the town of Boston” — and the still more important intelligence, perhaps the most decisive event of the war: “Washington set out from here on Friday last as Generalissimo of all the provincial troops in North America.” Congress had chosen the one man of military rank and experience whose character and talents were equal to the task. More than once but for his wisdom, patience, sympathy, and fortitude, the Cause must have failed.

“For solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity and wisdom of conclusion no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia.” So Chatham had declared a few months before. When Jefferson joined this Assembly, justly famous in the annals of democracy and political liberty, he had turned thirty-two. Among the delegates only two, John Jay and Edward Rutledge, were his juniors. But his reputation as author of *A Summary View* had preceded him, and he brought with him his own answer just adopted by the Burgesses of Virginia to Lord North’s Conciliatory Propositions. Accordingly he was at once called to the inner councils. “Though a silent member of Congress,” wrote John Adams, recording his impressions of the new arrival, “he was so prompt, frank, explicit, and decisive upon committees and in conversation — not even Samuel Adams was more so — that he soon seized upon my heart.” In other places the great New Englander<sup>1</sup> speaks of Jefferson’s “masterly pen,” of his “happy talent for composition” and of “the peculiar felicity of expression” which men remarked

<sup>1</sup> John Adams was eloquent, honest, strong-minded and stout-hearted, though irascible, often petulant, and sometimes blinded by personal vanity and egotism.

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in his writings. His tact and courtesy conciliated the Conservatives; the Whigs trusted him, and his silence was equally pleasing to those who wanted to speak and to those who wanted to get through the business of the day.

So within five days of his arrival he was added with John Dickinson of Pennsylvania to the Committee for drawing up an Address on the Causes of Taking up Arms. Thereupon, writes Jefferson in his Memoir, "I prepared a draught of the declaration committed to us. It was too strong for Mr. Dickinson. He still retained the hope of reconciliation with the mother country, and was unwilling it should be lessened by offensive statements. He was so honest a man, and so able a one, that he was greatly indulged even by those who could not feel his scruples. We therefore requested him to take the paper, and put it into a form he could approve. He did so, preparing an entire new statement, and preserving of the former only the last four paragraphs and half of the preceding one. We approved and reported it to Congress, who accepted it."

This address, we are told, was one of the most popular exhortations ever issued by Congress. It was read to the troops by their officers, to the populace amid thundering huzzas in every market place, and to religious bodies amid fervent prayers from nearly every pulpit in the Colonies. The concluding paragraphs, which Jefferson believed to have been taken from his rejected draft, certainly have something of the Jeffersonian ring. But even these paragraphs contain a pacific assurance: "Lest this declaration should disquiet the minds of our friends and fellow subjects in any part of the empire, we assure them, that we mean not to dissolve that union which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored. We have not raised armies with am-

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bitious designs of separating from Great Britain and establishing independent states.”

After this Address, the still more important task of answering Lord North's conciliatory propositions was entrusted to a Committee of four, who were selected by ballot. The four members chosen were Franklin, who headed the list, then Jefferson, John Adams, and R. H. Lee. At the request of his colleagues Jefferson drafted the answer. With various emendations it was approved and adopted by Congress at the end of July. Though tenacious of principles and with a good conceit of his own judgment, Jefferson was throughout life modest in the best and truest sense. Instead of drawing attention in his Memoir to the fact that he was thus chosen to serve on a Committee with Franklin and Adams, and by them to draft a great state paper, he explains it: “the answer of the Virginian assembly on that subject having been approved, I was requested by the Committee to prepare this report, which will account for the similarity of feature in the two instruments.” The family resemblance between the reply of Virginia and that of the Congress is indeed very close, so close that there is no need to retrace the argument. But the concluding paragraph, an appeal to the judgment of the civilized world, in which Jefferson's original draft hardly differs from the published document, deserves citation: —

“When the world reflects how inadequate to justice are these vaunted terms; when it attends to the rapid and bold succession of injuries, which, during a course of eleven years have been aimed at the colonies: when it reviews the pacific and respectful expostulations, which, during that whole time, were the sole arms we opposed to them; when it observes that our complaints were either not heard at all, or were answered with new and accumulated injuries — when it recollects that the minister himself, on an early occasion, declared ‘that he would

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never treat with America till he had brought her to his feet,' that an avowed partisan of ministry has, more lately, denounced against us the dreadful sentence 'delenda est Carthago'; and that this was done in presence of a British Senate, and being unreprieved by them, must be taken to be their own sentiments, especially as the purpose has already in part been carried into execution by the treatment of Boston and burning of Charlestown; when it considers the great armaments with which they have invaded us, and the circumstances of cruelty with which these have commenced and prosecuted hostilities; when these things, we say, are laid together and attentively considered, can the world be deceived into an opinion that we are unreasonable? Or can it hesitate to believe with us that nothing but our own exertions may defeat the ministerial sentence of death or abject submission."

The adoption of this reply to Lord North on July 31 was the last act of the session. On August 1 the Second Continental Congress adjourned, and Jefferson returned to Monticello.

The Colonies were now openly at war with Great Britain though their avowed aim was not yet complete separation and independence. Until the second petition of Congress in 1775, wrote John Jay years afterwards, "I never did hear any American of any class express any wish for the independence of the Colonies." In most of the colonies there were large numbers of loyalists who would have accepted Lord North's terms; but the most prominent of them were slipping away to England or Canada or the West Indies.

Among the loyalists or Tories of Virginia, John Randolph, then Attorney General, brother of Peyton and a kinsman of Jefferson, was at this time preparing to remove to England. Two letters, one before, the other after his departure, will serve to elucidate Jefferson's state of mind. The first, dated Monticello August 25, 1775, begins:—

"I am sorry the situation of our country should render it not eligible to you to remain longer in it. I hope the returning wisdom of Great

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Britain will, ere long, put an end to this unnatural contest. . . . My first wish is a restoration of our just rights; my second, a return of the happy period, when, consistently with duty, I may withdraw myself totally from the public stage. . . . Perhaps, (for the latter adds considerably to the warmth of the former wish,) looking with fondness towards a reconciliation with Great Britain, I cannot help hoping you may be able to contribute towards expediting this good work. I think it must be evident to yourself, that the Ministry have been deceived by their officers on this side of the water, who (for what purpose I cannot tell) have constantly represented the American opposition as that of a small faction. . . . This you can inform them, of your own knowledge, is untrue. . . . I wish they were thoroughly and minutely acquainted with every circumstance, relative to America, as it exists in truth. I am persuaded this would go far towards disposing them to reconciliation. Even those in Parliament, who are called friends to America . . . pronounced in the last Parliament that the Congress of 1774 did not mean to insist rigorously on the terms they held out, but kept something in reserve, to give up: and, in fact, that they would give up everything but the article of taxation. Now, the truth is far from this, as I can affirm. . . . The Congress stated the lowest terms they thought possible to be accepted, in order to convince the world they were not unreasonable. They gave up the monopoly and regulation of trade, and all acts of Parliament prior to 1764. . . . But this was before blood was spilt. I cannot affirm, but have reason to think, these terms would not now be accepted. I wish no false sense of honour, no ignorance of our real intentions, no vain hope that partial concessions of right will be accepted, may induce the Ministry to trifle with accommodation, till it shall be out of their power ever to accommodate. If, indeed, Great Britain, disjoined from her colonies, be a match for the most potent nations of Europe, with the colonies thrown into their scale, they may go on securely. But if they are not assured of this, it would be certainly unwise, by trying the event of another campaign to risque our accepting a foreign aid, which, perhaps, may not be obtainable, but on condition of everlasting avulsion from Great Britain. This would be thought a hard condition, to those who still wish for reunion with their parent country. I am sincerely one of those, and would rather be in dependence on Great Britain properly limited than on any nation upon the earth, or than on no nation. But I am one of those, too, who, rather than submit to the rights of

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legislating for us, assumed by the British Parliament . . . would lend my hand to sink the whole island in the ocean.

If undeceiving the Minister, as to matters of fact, may change his disposition, it will, perhaps, be in your power, by assisting to do this, to render service to the whole Empire at the most critical time, certainly, that it has ever seen."

The letter concludes with friendly assurances and with a hope that Randolph will continue the correspondence after his arrival in England. That Jefferson still hoped for a peaceful settlement cannot be doubted; for at this time he was busy enlarging his house, extending his kitchen garden, and improving his roads.

The new session of Congress, to which he had been re-elected, was convened for the first week in September; but the death of his second daughter, Jane (in infancy), prevented him from leaving for Philadelphia until the 25th. This time he reached his destination in six days. An anxious time followed.

Lord Dunmore, to punish a Colony whose allegiance he could not retain, had been trying to stir up a servile war. Jefferson's letters home in October and November describe the preparations in England and the raising of troops in Ireland and Germany for despatch to America. They tell of the success which at first attended the ill-starred invasion of Canada. In November Congress was so confident that it despatched a committee "to bring the Canadians into our Union." Having received no news from home for seven weeks Jefferson was tortured by suspense about the safety of his household. He wrote to his wife suggesting that they should remove themselves "from the alarms of Lord Dunmore," who was harassing the plantations on the coast and might possibly send raiding parties up the rivers.

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Jefferson's second letter to John Randolph (now in England) acquainted him with the sudden death of his brother Peyton, the portly and popular Speaker of Congress. More than forty years afterwards Jefferson wrote a brief account of Peyton Randolph, concluding with the following acute sketch of his character:—

"He was indeed a most excellent man; and none was ever more beloved and respected by his friends. Somewhat cold and coy towards strangers, but of the sweetest affability when ripened into acquaintance. Of Attic pleasantry in conversation, always good humored and conciliatory. With a sound and logical head, he was well read in law, and his opinions, when consulted, were highly regarded, presenting always a learned and sound view of the subject, but generally, too, a listlessness to go into its thorough development; for being heavy and inert in body, he was rather too indolent and careless for business, which occasioned him to get a smaller proportion of it at the bar than his abilities would otherwise have commanded. . . . Although not eloquent, his matter was so substantial that no man commanded more attention, which, joined with a sense of his great worth, gave him a weight in the House of Burgesses which few ever attained. He was liberal in his expenses but correct also, so as not to be involved in pecuniary embarrassments; and with a heart always open to the amiable sensibilities of our nature he did as many good acts as could have been done with his fortune, without injuriously impairing his means of continuing them."

Jefferson's second letter to John Randolph tells him that "the success of our arms" in Canada "has corresponded with the justice of our cause." He is expecting "every hour to be informed that Quebec had opened its arms to Colonel Arnold," and believes that "the delegates of Canada will join us in Congress and complete the American union." Lord Dunmore's hostilities in Virginia and attempt to burn Hampton have "roused our countrymen into a perfect phrenzy." He continues:—



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"It is an immense misfortune to the whole Empire to have a King of such a disposition at such a time. We are told, and everything proves it true, that he is the bitterest enemy we have. His Minister is able, and that satisfies me that ignorance or wickedness, somewhere controls him. . . . To undo his empire, he has but one truth more to learn; that, after colonies have drawn the sword, there is but one step more they can take. . . . Believe me, dear Sir, there is not in the British empire a man who more cordially loves a union with Great Britain than I do. But by the God that made me, I will cease to exist before I yield to a connection on such terms as the British Parliament propose; and in this I think I speak the sentiments of America. We want neither inducement nor power to declare and assert a separation. It is will, alone, which is wanting, and that is growing apace under the fostering hand of our King."

This was written at the end of November. Early in October the King had received a petition from London merchants protesting against the Government's American policy. The petitioners represented the deadly wounds which war would inflict on commerce, and predicted that the blood and treasure wasted would effect a fatal separation between the different parts of the Empire. They appealed to history to show that force had never been employed with success to change the opinions of freemen. But to no purpose. A counter petition was much more graciously received, "and the gentlemen of the Delegation had the Honour to kiss his Majesty's hand." A few days later, October 26, the King's speech to Parliament declared that the Colonies with "traitorous leaders," were engaged in a "desperate conspiracy to found an independent Empire" and that the rebellion would be put down at all costs by the forces of the Kingdom.

In November the House of Commons rejected Burke's motion for leave to bring in a Conciliatory Bill by two to one.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Congress still owned its allegiance to

<sup>1</sup> The largest minority yet obtained by the peace Whigs against the Govern-

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the King and the British constitution in a reply, December 6, 1775, to a royal proclamation declaring the Colonies in a state of rebellion. In mid-December Jefferson with Franklin and three others drafted a plan for an executive committee of Congress, which was to sit during the recess for the purpose of assisting the army and the commanders with advice, supplies, recruits, stores, etc. When Congress decided after all not to adjourn, Jefferson took leave of absence. He returned home on December 28, 1775, and remained at Monticello for the next four months.

ment. Burke's Bill was for "composing the present troubles in America" by exempting the Colonies from taxation by Parliament.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

MANUS HAEC INIMICA TYRANNIS ENSE PETIT PLACIDAM SUB LIBERTATE QUIETEM.

*"This hand, an enemy to tyrants, seeks with the sword peace and contentment under a free government."*

*Inscribed by Algernon Sydney in the album of the University of Copenhagen, and by the State of Massachusetts in gold letters on the State House at Boston.*

WHY did the beginning of the year 1776 find the British parliament against all reason and interest bent on enforcing the Royal policy, while Congress, resolute to resist encroachments on Colonial constitutions and to secure fiscal autonomy, was still reluctant to separate from Britain and the British Empire?

The theory that nations love war, man being a combative and pugnacious animal, is probably derived from the observed fact that almost every war, however foolish and unnecessary or unjust, gains popular support as soon as the first gun has been fired. "My country right or wrong" expresses the view of the average man after war has been declared. Wars are not made by nations or parliaments but by kings or ministers. They are always desired by powerful interests, and wherever there is even the pretence of representative government the press is employed to heat up passion and spread false reports. In 1775 newspaper accounts of the resistance of Massachusetts yeomen touched the military pride of a nation, arrogant after its

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victories over the French, and therefore all the more sensitive. Many Whigs who had disapproved of the Stamp Act and the Tea duties now said that government must be supported, that the British Empire must at any cost be preserved, and that, whoever was right in the beginning, American insolence now deserved chastisement.

Orators like Chatham and Burke tried to rouse the conscience of the nation, comparing fairly enough the tea duty with shipmoney, and the American patriots with Hampden and Pym. But they found unusual apathy, not only in Parliament, but among the people. Many of the Nonconformists indeed, led by Priestley and Price, espoused the cause of liberty with fervour. On the other hand the Bishops and clergy of the Established Church were almost unanimous for the war; and some of the Methodists, inspired by Wesley, proclaimed doctrines not far removed from passive obedience to Royal authority.

The war itself, once preparations began, supplied the usual incentive to an active minority of interested patriots, whose noisy protestations of loyalty to King and country contrasted with a more than ordinary reluctance on the part of the common people to serve with the forces. Towards the end even of Chatham's glorious war against the traditional enemy across the channel several serious riots had attended the calling out of the militia. But an overseas campaign against their own kith and kin was unpopular from the first. "The recruiting service," wrote a contemporary chronicler, in all probability Edmund Burke,<sup>1</sup> "which may be considered as a kind of political barometer with respect to the sentiments of the lowest orders," went on "very heavily both in England and Ire-

<sup>1</sup> There is little doubt that he was responsible for the American paragraphs in the *Annual Register* of 1776, pp. 38, 39.

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land, though no encouragement was wanting, nor means left untried" to procure extraordinary levies for service by land and sea.

During one month of 1776 eight hundred men were carried off in London alone by press gangs, and large numbers of prisoners in English and Irish gaols were pardoned on engaging to fight against the American rebels. When these odious and desperate devices proved insufficient to provide a British army of the size required, the government sought foreign aid. First they tried to induce the Dutch to allow a Scotch brigade in their service to be employed in America. But the States General, remembering at what price Holland had purchased republican freedom, rejected the proposal. Then they negotiated at the Court of St. Petersburg for 20,000 Russians, but without success. All over the continent jealousy of British power, or an awakening zeal for liberty, favoured the American cause. "Even Voltaire and Rousseau," wrote someone, "who never agreed in anything else, are said to hold the same opinion on that subject." That the Americans were fighting in freedom's cause was nowhere asserted with more vehemence than in England by Chat-ham, Fox, and the Duke of Richmond. They and their followers openly professed the opinion that Englishmen would be enslaved if the Americans were defeated.

Baffled in Russia and Holland, George the Third and Lord North found what they wanted in Germany. Hanoverian troops were sent to replace the English garrisons in Gibraltar and Minorca, and large bodies of mercenaries were bought from the petty princes of Hesse and Brunswick to be shipped to America. By this means there was collected in the spring of 1776 an army which, skilfully led, would almost certainly have vanquished Washington's raw

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levies. The supply of this expedition with naval and military stores of all descriptions at so prodigious a distance from the base gave employment and emolument to multitudes of manufacturers, labourers, and traders. It engaged a vast quantity of idle shipping in the transport service and "caused such a bustle of business and circulation of cash" as stifled the complaints of towns like Liverpool, which had been suffering from the loss of the slave trade.<sup>1</sup> The contractors were already reaping a golden harvest, and the prospect of increasing profits was quite sufficient to excite in this class of unwarlike citizens an eager appetite and rage for a long fight to a finish.

Even before the great expedition was despatched, a vast expenditure, yielding much profit to country gentlemen and favoured contractors, with many pickings doubtless for the king's friends in parliament, had been incurred for the supply of the army beleaguered in Boston. Prodigious supplies of hay, oats, and beans were bought to furnish a single regiment of light cavalry then quartered in Boston. Lest alcoholic courage should fail, ten thousand butts of strong beer were ordered from two right loyal brewers. To a modern War Office the extravagance and waste of 1776 would seem a bagatelle. But in those days the expenditure was colossal, and however little the British soldier gained, "the contracts were very lucrative, the connections of those who had interest to obtain them extensive, and the number of persons who found employment or benefit by the different services immense." No wonder then that "such a concurrence of circumstances found a numerous and zealous party in support of govern-

<sup>1</sup> As 'the Guinea ships' hitherto employed in the negro slave trade arrived in Liverpool they were laid up. In August, 1775, 3000 unemployed seamen rioted in Liverpool. They were soon afterwards absorbed in the King's Service.

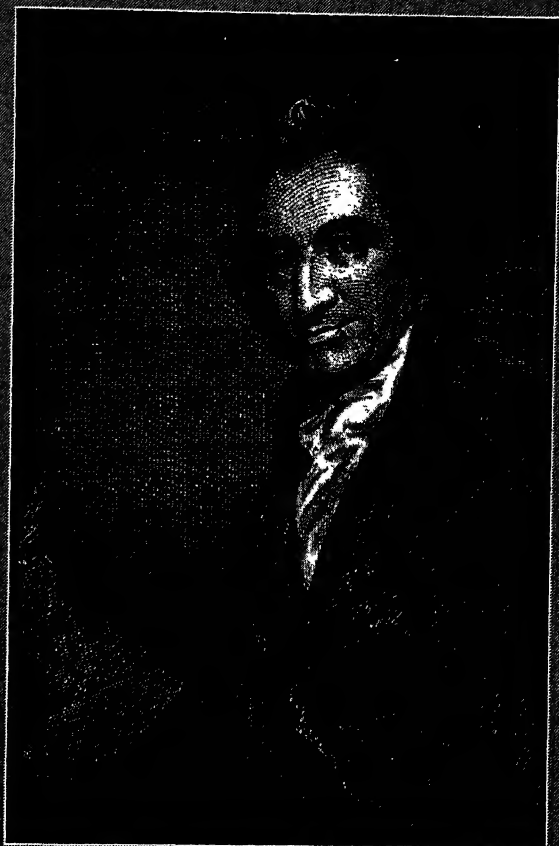
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ment; and that they should earnestly wish for the continuance of a war by which they profited so much.”<sup>1</sup>

In the colonies there was no such stimulus to patriotism. The revenues from taxes were altogether inadequate for war. The Colonial Governments had little credit and the Colonists little ready money. Many of the rich people were loyalists. The merchants, largely Scotch, were for peace and submission. Corruption there was, but it did not enrich. It only helped to demoralise soldiers already homesick and dismayed by the bad news from Canada. Discontent and disease were thinning Washington's forces when the British armada was ready to sail in the spring of 1776. But the people and their representatives in Congress seem to have been for the most part confident of success. Their feelings had been exasperated during the winter by the burning of Norfolk, the chief port of Virginia, and of Falmouth on the coast of Maine. The bombardment and burning of Norfolk on New Year's Day, 1776, was a senseless outrage which made the royal cause hopeless in Virginia. Five or six thousand people, who had mostly been opposed to a rupture with the mother country for business reasons, were rendered homeless, and property to the value of £300,000 was destroyed.

These acts and methods of barbarism prepared the soil for the seed of independence, which was sown broadcast by Tom Paine's *Common Sense*, one of the most powerful and influential pamphlets ever published in the English language. It appeared on January 10, 1776. Its author, who was at once recognised as a master controversialist on the Republican side, had left England two years before to seek a livelihood in Philadelphia. *Common Sense* ran like wildfire through the Colonies. It shattered the King's

<sup>1</sup> See the Annual Register for 1776.



Thomas Paine

*Painted by Romney*





## The Declaration of Independence

cause by setting forth in simple language the virtues of democracy, the utility of independence, and the absurdity of submitting to the arbitrary rule of an hereditary tyrant. To the conservative and slow-moving mind of Washington its doctrine seemed "sound" and its reasoning "unanswerable." Within three months 120,000 copies had passed into circulation, and the lingering doubts of many plain peaceable folk reluctant to break with Britain were dispelled.

It need not be supposed that Jefferson spent the first four months of 1776 in political idleness, any more than John Adams, who took a shorter vacation about the same time. We may be sure that he was working with his friends for the final step. We know that he was Chairman of the Committee of Safety in Albemarle County. We know from his account books that he was organizing a supply of powder for the militiamen of Virginia and collecting money for the Bostonians. The death of his mother at the end of March might have delayed his return to Philadelphia. But he waited several weeks longer; for he did not leave Monticello till May 7, or take his seat again in Congress at Philadelphia until May 13. The reason for this delay may readily be guessed. Before starting he wanted to be sure that Virginia would again set the pattern. Doubtless when he left Monticello he had in his pocket a draft of the resolution which was to be passed unanimously by the Virginia Convention a few days later. For while New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland (the middle states) held back, the Virginia Convention on May 15 instructed its delegates in Congress to take the decisive step: —

*"Resolved, unanimously, That the delegates appointed to represent this Colony in General Congress, be instructed to propose to that*

## Thomas Jefferson

respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and independent States, absolved from all allegiance to, or dependence upon, the Crown or Parliament of Great Britain; and that they give the assent of this Colony to such a declaration, and to whatever measure may be thought proper and necessary by the Congress for forming foreign alliances, and a confederation of the Colonies, at such time, and in the manner, as to them shall seem best: Provided that the power of forming government for, and the regulations of the internal concerns of each Colony, be left to the respective Colonial legislatures."

Again Virginia was to take the lead. How much of quiet counsel and inspiration had been given by Jefferson before he set out can only be surmised. All we know is that within a few days of his arrival Congress committed to him the glorious task with which his name and fame will forever be linked. Only a sentence about all this appears in his Autobiography: "On the 15th of May, 1776, the Convention of Virginia instructed their delegates in Congress to propose to that body to declare the colonies independent of Great Britain, and appointed a committee to prepare a declaration of rights and a plan of government." This 'plan of government' was to be the first constitution framed for Virginia as a state independent of Britain, if not the first written constitution of the New World.

On May 16, three days after taking his seat in Congress, Jefferson wrote a letter to his friend Thomas Nelson (Junior), who afterwards in 1781 succeeded him for a short time as Governor of Virginia. It shows us that Jefferson was as anxious about a Constitution for Virginia as about American independence. He asks Nelson, who was a member of the Virginia Assembly, to keep him supplied with 'conventional intelligence' and doubts whether a new constitution should be hastily framed without previous recourse to the popular will. "Should our Conven-

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tion propose to establish now a form of government, perhaps it might be agreeable to recall for a short time the delegates. It is a work of the most interesting nature and such as every individual would wish to have his voice in. In truth it is the whole object of the present controversy; for should a bad government be instituted for us [Virginians] in future, it had been as well to have accepted at first the bad one offered to us from beyond the water without the risk and expense of contest."

To Jefferson the main purpose of separation was not Independence but the democratic reforms which might through independence be achieved. To secure a good constitution for his own State of Virginia was his prime object. It was for Washington and his staff to win the war. Jefferson's tactics already are political. He knows what sort of a Constitution he wants for his native State, and fears it may be lost in his absence; so he hints that the Virginia Delegates should be recalled from Congress if the Convention decides to frame a new mode of government, and by way of precedent mentions that other colonies similarly engaged have recalled their delegates from Philadelphia, leaving only one or two to vote for their colony and to keep Congress informed on its interests and affairs. "I am at present," he adds, "in our old lodgings tho' I think, as the excessive heats of the city are coming on fast, to endeavour to get lodgings in the skirts of the town where I may have the benefit of a freely circulating air. . . . I am here in the same uneasy anxious state in which I was last fall without Mrs. Jefferson who could not come with me. I wish much to see you here, yet hope you will contrive to bring on as early as you can in convention the great questions of the session. I suppose they will tell us what to say on the subject of independence, but hope

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respect will be expressed to the right of opinion in other colonies who may happen to differ from them. When at home I took great pains to enquire into the sentiments of the people on that head; in the upper counties I think I may safely say nine out of ten are for it."

In this same letter he mentions the disagreeable news of a second defeat at Quebec, and informs Nelson that Congress has ordered a new battalion of riflemen to be raised in Virginia.

Jefferson was soon busy at Philadelphia. The day after he took his seat Canadian and Indian affairs were referred to a Committee of three, Livingstone, Jefferson, and John Adams. Their report, in Jefferson's handwriting, consists of a series of brief resolutions, mainly for the purpose of assisting the operations in Canada. The first two direct the Commissioners for Indian Affairs in the Northern Department to procure the aid of Indians to undertake the reduction of Fort Niagara, promising a reward for every prisoner brought to headquarters, and similar inducements to Indians who would join in an attack on Detroit.

But Jefferson could not forget that a new Virginian constitution was now in the making. "Mr. Jefferson who was in Congress," writes Edmund Randolph, "urged a youthful friend<sup>1</sup> in the Convention to oppose a permanent constitution until the people should elect deputies for the official purpose. He denied the power of the body elected (as he conceived them to be the agents for the management of the war) to exceed some temporary regimen." On hearing at the end of May that the Convention considered itself at liberty to make a Constitution without special mandate from the electors Jefferson set to work and drafted "a Bill for new-modelling the form of

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* Randolph himself.

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Government and for establishing the fundamental principles thereof in future." But to insure his democratic principle Jefferson's draft concludes "It is proposed that the above bill, after correction by the Convention, shall be referred by them to the people to be assembled in their respective counties: and that the suffrages of two thirds of the counties shall be requisite to establish it." This 'New Model,' Jefferson's first essay in an art older than Aristotle, at which so many political idealists have tried their hands, was finished in June. It was conveyed by his fellow delegate, George Wythe, from Philadelphia to Williamsburg, and by him handed to Pendleton, who presided over the Convention. On July 27 Wythe wrote to tell Jefferson that his plan was too late. Another had already been committed to the whole house. "To those who had the chief hand in forming it the one you put into my hands was shown. Two or three parts of this were, with little alteration, inserted"; but members were too tired and too impatient to go over the work again.

Nearly fifty years afterwards, Jefferson gave an account of this incident to Judge Woodward, who was puzzled by the similarity between the preamble to the Virginia Constitution and some sentences in the Declaration of Independence: —

"The fact is unquestionable, that the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of Virginia were drawn originally by George Mason, one of our really great men, and of the first order of greatness. The history of the preamble to the latter is this: I was then at Philadelphia with Congress, and knowing that the Convention of Virginia was engaged in forming a plan of government, I turned my mind to the same subject, and drew a sketch or outline of a Constitution, with a preamble, which I sent to Mr. Pendleton, president of the Convention, on the mere possibility that it might suggest something worth incorporation into that before the Convention. He informed me afterwards by letter, that he

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received it on the day on which the Committee of the Whole had reported to the House the plan they had agreed to; that that had been so long in hand, so disputed inch by inch, and the subject of so much altercation and debate, that they were worried with the contentions it had produced, and could not, from mere lassitude, have been induced to open the instrument again; but that, being pleased with the preamble to mine, they adopted it in the House by way of amendment to the report of the Committee, and thus my preamble became tacked to the work of George Mason. The Constitution, with the preamble, was passed on the 29th of June, and the Committee of Congress had only the day before reported to that body the draft of the Declaration of Independence. The fact is, that the preamble was prior in composition to the Declaration; and both having the same object, of justifying our separation from Great Britain, they used necessarily the same materials of justification, and hence their similitude."

Jefferson's main objections to the Constitution adopted were that the franchise was too narrow and that the tide-water counties were over represented. These conservative features were inherited from the Colonial Constitution, and were carried by the exertions of the planters, that is to say, the old Virginian aristocracy. When it came to the vote for Governor the Conservatives put up Thomas Nelson (senior), who had been President of the Council under the Royal régime. The radicals nominated Patrick Henry and carried that popular orator and agitator by 60 votes to 45.

This was the end of Henry's career as a revolutionary. He had no capacity for business and not much for administration. As governor he proved a mediocrity; and in the following autumn the leadership of democracy in Virginia passed to Jefferson. The contrast between the two men is obvious. It has been drawn, with some false touches and exaggerated antitheses, by Dr. H. J. Eckenrode,<sup>1</sup> who sees in "the astute and pushing Jefferson" a Rousseau and

<sup>1</sup> In his book on *The Revolution in Virginia*.

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a Robespierre rolled into one, while Henry was being 'sobered by time and responsibility into a conservative, almost a Bourbon.' Let us consider the contrast as presented by Dr. Eckenrode:—

"The rival democratic leaders were not only unlike in temperament, but in outlook. Patrick Henry was essentially an agitator and one of the ablest that ever lived, the first great representative of the American democracy and still its most splendid and magnetic personality. Since his career was confined to Virginia save for three brief terms in the Continental Congress, Henry is much less generally known than Jefferson, who was greatly inferior to him in most of the qualities of leadership. Nevertheless, Jefferson, though gifted with nothing of Henry's eloquence and little of his charm and power, succeeded in displacing him as the head of his party in Virginia and in occupying the position which should have been his by historical development, that of founder of the national Democratic-Republican Party and President of the United States. Jefferson, in all probability, would have eventually replaced Henry even if the latter had remained in the assembly instead of retiring into the governorship; for the orator was a political radical rather than a social reformer and much of a conservative at bottom. He was too acute to become a Rousseauan doctrinaire like his rival, mistrusting human nature because he knew it so well. More than that, deep down in him he was a localist; he loved the old ways, the ancient landmarks, and had no wish to live in an un-Virginian Virginia given over to the strange gods of liberal philosophy. The Revolution for him had ended with the establishment of a commonwealth under a constitution of equal political rights; he wanted no further egalitarian advances.<sup>1</sup> In some way, too, hard to explain, the man had changed since his disappointment in military command. Up to that time he had been a Boanerges; after his return to civil life he settled down from fiery action into the humdrum round of office routine for which he was so unsuited; his ambition narrowed, his imagination failed. Few psychological studies are more interesting than the transformation of the radical, prepared in 1775 for any bold advance upon the future, into the obstructionist fighting his last great fight against the adoption of the Federal Constitution and magnificently losing.

<sup>1</sup> If the rights were 'equal,' how could they be made more 'egalitarian'?



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For Jefferson, on the other hand, the Revolution only began with the Declaration of Independence. That was necessary in order that other things might follow — that wrongs might be redressed, inequalities leveled, and the State brought to the Utopian perfection all generous thinkers demanded; freedom from England was the only condition of political and social development. For this reason, Jefferson, with his definite reforms, must have supplanted Henry, who had no programme at all to offer, especially in an age of dreams when prophets often prevailed over men of action. As for the reformer himself, he was a curious mixture of prophet and practical politician, a sort of common-sense Robespierre, devoid of Robespierre's fanaticism and essential madness; what he could do to advance the rights of man he did, and for the rest — the more he could not do — was satisfied to leave to another age. That he was sincere need not be questioned; his enthusiasm began in youth and continued through life. Democracy was a religion to Jefferson, and, with all his tortuous politician's soul, he held fast to the faith, even amidst the disillusionment of the French Revolution; it was to him the miracle that makes dry bones men, the power destined in time to heal the sorrows of the world."

Those who are familiar with Jefferson's character and career will be surprised that a Virginian writer should have accumulated so many disparagements and misjudgments in two unlucky paragraphs. The real Jefferson was so retiring, so unwilling to stand in the political limelight; pomp and ceremony were so distasteful to him, that ill-natured critics have often accused him of carrying to an excess and affectation his dislike for personal ostentation and self-advertisement. Was there ever a democratic leader from Cleon to Lloyd George who blew so few blasts on his own trumpet as Jefferson? 'Astute' if you like; but 'pushing' or 'pushful' is the most unlucky epithet that a critic could select from the vocabulary of abuse.

But why go on to make Jefferson's career incomprehensible by pointing out that, though his influence and power far surpassed Henry's both in Virginia and America,

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he had 'little' of his rival's 'charm and power'? It is quite true that Henry was a wonderful orator, whereas Jefferson was no orator at all. But we know from a cloud of contemporary witnesses of Jefferson's personal magnetism — that he was an ornament in every society; that he was distinguished by courtly manners and brilliant conversation; that he inspired a host of political friends and disciples with unbounded zeal and devotion. His political enemies hated him for political reasons. If he was traduced and vilified, it was by those whose policies he overturned, or whose privileges he abolished. The devotion of his family and friends, the testimony of travellers who enjoyed his hospitality, of political opponents who succumbed to the enchantment of his presence, combine to reject the prodigious paradox that Jefferson was so much greater a leader than Henry 'though greatly inferior to him in most of the qualities of leadership,' and so much more successful in the arts of persuading his fellow countrymen to adopt his opinions than one who, besides possessing the eloquence which he lacked, was also far more powerful and far more charming. Nor is it necessary to believe that he combined such incredible contradictions of character that he could be a doctrinaire and yet not a doctrinaire, a faithful democrat and yet a tortuous politician. The truth is that in all the qualities except eloquence, which fit a man to guide a party, and direct national affairs, Jefferson was Henry's superior — in industry, learning, statecraft, in scientific attainment and business ability, in character, consistency, fortitude, tact, refinement, prudence, foresight, and judgment.

There is no need to make a mystery of the fact that the Sage of Monticello wielded a stronger influence over men, trod the political stage with a firmer foot, and left a far

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deeper and more enduring imprint on laws, institutions, and society than the revolutionary orator. Again, Jefferson was not in any sense a disciple of Rousseau; and if the term political, or philosophic radical may be allowed to retain its proper meaning, it is pre-eminently applicable to Jefferson and singularly inapplicable to Henry.

Jefferson's 'New Model' or 'Proposed Constitution for Virginia' begins by deposing King George the Third:—

"Whereas George Guelf, king of Great Britain and Ireland and Elector of Hanover, heretofore entrusted with the exercise of the kingly office in this government hath endeavoured to pervert the same into a detestable and insupportable tyranny; by putting his negative on laws the most wholesome and necessary for ye public good . . . <sup>1</sup> by answering our repeated petitions for redress with a repetition of injuries; and finally by abandoning the helm of government and declaring us out of his allegiance and protection; by which several acts of misrule the said George Guelf has forfeited the kingly office, and has rendered it necessary for the preservation of the people that he should be immediately deposed from the same, and divested of all its privileges, powers, and prerogatives: and forasmuch as the public liberty may be more certainly secured by abolishing an office which all experience hath shewn to be inveterately inimical thereto, and it will thereupon become further necessary to re-establish such ancient principles as are friendly to the rights of the people and to declare certain others which may co-operate with and fortify the same in future.

Be it therefore enacted by the authority of the people that the said, George Guelf be, and he hereby is, deposed from the kingly office within this government and absolutely divested of all its rights, powers, and prerogatives: and that he and his descendants and all persons acting by or through him, and all other persons whatsoever shall be and forever remain incapable of the same: and that the said office shall henceforth cease and never more either in name or substance be re-established within this colony."

<sup>1</sup> A series of grievances and injuries are here recited.

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On this flaming republican exordium follows a concise citation of Colonial grievances in language often recalling the Declaration of Independence. Next Jefferson proceeds to set forth fundamental laws and principles of government for his native state. His Model is well worth examining; for it shows us exactly what kind of constitution Jefferson as a practical reformer desired his own countrymen to adopt.

The legislative, executive, and judiciary were to be separate and exclusive.

The legislature would consist of a House of Representatives, and a House of Senators. Any elector is qualified to be elected to the House of Representatives. All male citizens of full age who had paid scot and lot (rates and taxes) for five years, or owned 25 acres of land in the country or one-fourth of an acre in a town, are qualified to vote. The Representative House is to consist of not less than 150 or more than 300 members. Four hundred electors are entitled to elect a member, and the proportion is to be adjusted from time to time on the principle of one vote one value.

The Senate is to consist of not less than 15 or more than 50 members. It is elected by the House of Representatives. One-third of the Senators retire every three years. High court judges are entitled to sit and speak, but not to vote in the Senate. Money bills are reserved to the House of Representatives; otherwise the legislative powers of the two houses are equal, and the assent of both is necessary to the passing of a law.

Capital punishment except for murder and Military offences is abolished; likewise torture.

An Administrator, to take the place of the King, is to be appointed annually for one year only. He is to have no

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power to veto bills, or to dissolve the General Assembly, to declare wars, to pardon crimes, or to confer dignities. A Privy Council is elected annually by the House of Representatives to advise the Administrator. The House of Representatives is also vested with the appointment of delegates to the American Congress. Judges are chosen by the Administrator, subject to the negative of the Privy Council. All facts in causes are to be tried by jury after evidence given in open court. Every landless citizen is entitled to fifty acres of unappropriated land; but no lands shall be appropriated until purchased by public authorities from native Indian proprietors.

The laws of descent are by gavelkind, but females are to have equal rights with males.

No person hereafter coming into Virginia "shall be held within the same in slavery under any pretext whatever." Further "all persons shall have full and free liberty of religious opinion; nor shall any be compelled to frequent or maintain any religious institution."

There shall be no standing armies in time of peace. Printing presses shall be free.

No salaries shall be given to the Administrator, to legislators, judges, Privy Councillors or Delegates to Congress, but reasonable expenses of subsistence may be provided if the legislature so direct. No person shall hold office who has given a bribe to obtain it.

None of these fundamental laws can be repealed or altered except by the personal consent of the people shown by majorities for such repeal or alteration in two-thirds of the counties.

So much for Jefferson's New Model of a Constitution for Virginia. At 33 he is a philosophic radical, a democrat, favouring complete religious toleration, freedom of the

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press and the abolition of entail. He confers all important powers, including peace and war, on an Assembly freely elected by the whole population of adult male taxpayers in equal electoral districts.

Meanwhile the British forces had evacuated Boston, and Washington had occupied New York. The English expedition had not yet crossed the Atlantic. By this time the sentiment for independence and separation from Great Britain had ripened, and we may return to Jefferson's Memoir, based, as he tells us, on notes taken by him in Congress. His entry for June 7, 1776, runs:—

“The delegates of Virginia moved, in obedience to instructions from their constituents, that the Congress should declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; that measures should be immediately taken for procuring the assistance of foreign powers, and a Confederation be formed to bind the Colonies more closely together.”

Next day (Saturday, June 8) Congress referred the Virginia Motion to a Committee of the Whole House, and passed that day and Monday the tenth in debate. Jefferson, who took pretty full notes, has left us an epitome of the arguments used for and against the policy of declaring independence. The summary itself must be summarized; for it takes up several pages of the memoir. Against a Declaration Robert R. Livingstone, John Dickinson, E. Rutledge, and others argued that such a step would be premature, and should be deferred until the voice of the people drove them to it. The Middle Colonies — Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, and New York — “were not yet ripe for bidding adieu to the British connection, but they were fast ripening, and in a short

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time would join in the general voice of America." The delegates of some colonies had received no instructions on the subject, while others had been instructed to oppose any such resolution. If Congress voted now by a majority for Independence, the Middle Colonies, or some of them, might secede. A colonial secession would not be compensated by a foreign alliance; nor indeed, if the colonies were divided, could foreign support be looked for. In any case they should await intelligence from the agent they had despatched to Paris.

On behalf of an immediate Declaration John Adams, R. H. Lee, George Wythe, and others pointed out that no speaker had argued against the policy of Independence or the right to separate. "The king himself had dissolved the bond of allegiance by levying war on the colonies. The king's answer to the Lord Mayor and Common Council of London, which had just come to hand, left no room for doubt. The people of America favoured independence, and wanted their representatives to lead the way. Only Pennsylvania and Maryland hesitated. Their backwardness was due partly to the influence of the proprietary power, partly to the fact that they had not yet been invaded. It was vain to wait for perfect unanimity, as all men are never of one sentiment on any question. The forward colonies must again run the hazard. The Dutch revolution began with a secession from Spain of only three states. Without a declaration of independence they could not expect aid from France and Spain. Delay was dangerous. If France would assist them now, the supplies of the British armies might be cut off. "The only misfortune is that we did not enter into alliance with France six months sooner, as, besides opening her ports for the vent of our last year's produce, she might have marched

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an army into Germany and prevented the petty princes there from selling their unhappy subjects to subdue us."

It appearing in the course of the two days' debate — so Jefferson wrote — that the Colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and South Carolina were not yet matured for falling from the parent stem, but were fast advancing to that state, it was thought most prudent to wait a while for them, and to postpone the final decision to July 1.

"That this / might occasion as little delay as possible a committee was appointed to prepare a Declaration of Independence. The committee were John Adams, Dr. Franklin, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingstone and myself. Committees were also appointed at the same time, to prepare a plan of confederation for the Colonies, and to state the terms proper to be proposed for foreign alliance. The committee for drawing the Declaration of Independence desired me to do it. It was accordingly done, and being approved by them, I reported it to the House on Friday, the 28th of June, when it was read and ordered to lie on the table. On July 1st, the House resolved itself into a committee and resumed consideration of the original motion made by the delegates of Virginia, which being again debated through the day, was carried in the affirmative by the votes of New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia."

South Carolina and Pennsylvania voted against it. Delaware was divided. The delegates from New York declared they were for it themselves, but must await instructions. Next day South Carolina, Delaware, and Pennsylvania fell into line, and soon afterwards the Convention of New York sent its approval. Congress then proceeded to consider the Declaration of Independence. Its passage was not a smooth one. Jefferson says in his Memoir:—

"The pusillanimous idea that we had friends in England worth keeping terms with still haunted the minds of many. For this reason, those passages which conveyed censures on the people of England were struck



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out, lest they should give them offence. The clause too, reprobating the enslaving the inhabitants of Africa, was struck out in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who, on the contrary, still wished to continue it. Our northern brethren also, I believe, felt a little tender under those censures; for though their people had very few slaves themselves, yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others. The debates having taken up the greater parts of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th days of July, were, on the evening of the last, closed; the Declaration was reported by the committee, agreed to by the House, and signed by every member present, except Mr. Dickinson."

Such is the authentic account by Jefferson of the proceedings in Congress and Congressional Committee from June 7, when the Delegates of Virginia moved the Resolution, to July 4, when the Declaration of Independence as amended was reported, ratified, and signed. A vast amount of research and criticism has been expended by American historians on this, the most precious document in American history; and Jefferson's narrative has been confirmed in almost every particular, except that the signatures were not, as he supposed, all affixed on July the 4th. It is certain that some of the delegates signed it a few days later. A remarkable fact not mentioned by Jefferson is that he received more votes than any other member, when this, the most important committee ever appointed by Congress, was elected. Consequently he became chairman of the Committee and was asked by his fellow members to draft the Declaration of Independence.

At this time Jefferson was lodging in Philadelphia at the house of one Graaf. It was a new brick house, as he afterwards recalled, three stories high "on the south side of Market Street, probably between Seventh and Eighth Streets." He rented (at 35 shillings a week) the second floor — a parlour and bedroom ready furnished. In that

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parlour on a writing desk of his own design he spent some twenty days composing the Declaration of Independence. In 1825 a favourite granddaughter leaving Monticello for Boston to marry Joseph Coolidge, lost her writing desk at sea with some treasured letters. To console her, Jefferson sent Coolidge his Independence desk with the following inscription attached : —

“Thomas Jefferson gives this writing desk to Joseph Coolidge, Jr. as a memorial of affection. It was made from a drawing of his own by Ben Randolph, cabinet-maker at Philadelphia, with whom he first lodged on his arrival in that city, in May 1776, and is the identical one on which he wrote the Declaration of Independence. Politics, as well as religion, has its superstitions. These gaining strength with time, may one day give imaginary value to this relic, for its associations with the birth of the Great Charter of our Independence.

Monticello, November 18, 1825.”

Of a document, which stands in the history of human liberty with the Magna Charta, praise is superfluous. Of its majestic force and dignity let the first two paragraphs — from which only seven of Jefferson’s words were omitted and only three altered — speak for themselves.

A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America,  
in *General* Congress assembled.

“When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new gov-

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ernment, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government."

Then follows an impressive recital of George the Third's usurpations, which marked him out as a tyrant 'unfit to be the ruler of a free people.' American appeals to the British people and warnings addressed to parliament had been of no avail.

"We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honour."

If praise of the Declaration is superfluous, criticism is vain. Modern taste may object to a word here or a sentence there; but the whole will survive, an imperishable expression of a great moment in the history of freedom,

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in the history of nationality, in the history of republican government. Inspired by the crisis, in an atmosphere throbbing with popular emotion, Jefferson's studied prose reveals in its grandeur of purpose and depth of thought a noble response to the national call. Successful at the moment, fortunate in the event, it is and will remain the most cherished possession of republican America.

No wonder then that all the incidents of its composition and adoption have been zealously gathered. After two or three small amendments by Franklin and Adams, Jefferson's draft was submitted to Congress and debated for three days, from the second to the fourth of July. While it was being battered and buffeted the young and sensitive author sat in silent agony, modestly leaving Adams to protect his handiwork. It had been written and rewritten, polished and repolished; and few authors like one blue pencil, let alone an assembly of editors. But though some members were inclined to carp and cavil, it is agreed that most of the omissions and changes were improvements. A few passages were criticised for their substance, others for their form. The words 'Scotch and other foreign auxiliaries' excited the ire of a delegate of Scottish descent. "Several strictures on the conduct of the British king, in negating our repeated repeals of the law which permitted the importation of slaves, were disapproved," wrote Jefferson, "by some Southern gentlemen, whose reflections were not yet matured to the full abhorrence of that traffic. Although the offensive expressions were immediately yielded, these gentlemen continued their depredations on other parts of the instrument."

It was of course unfair to saddle George the Third with responsibility for American slavery, and for the odious

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traffic in human life, though the Crown deserved severe censure for vetoing measures passed by the Virginian legislature to suppress the importation of negroes. In any case Jefferson's paragraph (omitted by Congress), denouncing George the Third for the American slave trade, would have been stronger, if its invective had been less violent. Yet we must admire this generous effort to commit the United Colonies<sup>1</sup> to a strong moral censure on domestic slavery, when they were proclaiming to the world their political emancipation. John Adams says that, when the Committee met to con over Jefferson's draft, he was delighted with its high tone, and especially with the sentences on negro slavery. ' At a time when the British government was inciting the slaves to rise against their masters in the South, a sweeping measure of abolition was of course out of the question. But Jefferson might well think the moment favourable for a declaration against the slave trade, seeing that it had been suspended by war. A solemn stigma affixed to this infamous traffic by Congress, and inserted in the charter of American rights, would have been a grand instrument later on in the hands of those who felt with Jefferson that abolition by gradual steps was not merely required by the religion of humanity but was essential to the future happiness and security of the American people. Jefferson had already given proof of his zeal for this cause; and he returned, as we shall see, again and yet again to the charge — the only powerful statesman of his day in America who was willing to risk political fortune and social favour in an active effort to remove this dark blot from the institutions of his native land.

While Congress was discussing and pruning his periods,

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson wrote "states"; but Congress preferred "colonies."

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Jefferson was sitting beside Dr. Franklin. The veteran, observing his young friend "writhing à little" under so much acrimonious criticism, comforted him with the story of John Thompson the hatter. "I have made it a rule," said the Doctor, "to avoid becoming the draftsman of papers to be reviewed by a public body. I took my lesson from an incident, which I will relate to you": —

"When I was a journeyman printer, one of my companions, an apprenticed hatter, having served out his time, was about to open shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome signboard, with a proper inscription. He composed it in these words: 'John Thompson, Hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money,' with a figure of a hat subjoined. But he thought he would submit it to his friends for their amendments. The first he showed it to thought the word 'Hatter' tautologous, because followed by the words 'makes hats,' which showed he was a hatter. It was struck out. The next observed that the word 'makes' might as well be omitted, because his customers would not care who made the hats. If good and to their mind they would buy by whomsoever made. He struck it out. A third said he thought the words 'for ready money' were useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit. Everyone who purchased expected to pay. They were parted with, and the inscription now stood 'John Thompson sells hats.' 'Sells hats!' said his next friend, 'why nobody will expect you to give them away; what then is the use of that word?' It was stricken out, and 'hats' followed it, the rather as there was one painted on the board. So the inscription was reduced ultimately to 'John Thompson' with the figure of a hat subjoined."

Whether Jefferson enjoyed the humour of it at the time, we may doubt; but he saw it afterwards. Another of Jefferson's favourite anecdotes tells how the end was accelerated by a providential dispensation. Near the old State House at Philadelphia, now called Independence Hall, where the debates were held, was a livery stable. The afternoon of July 4 was very hot. Through the windows of the hall, which were wide open, swarms of

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horse flies descended and assailed the silk stockinged legs of the delegates. Under this infliction the majority which wished to conclude the discussion grew impatient; and so on that very day the Declaration was approved, after Congress had made eighteen suppressions, six trifling additions, and ten alterations.

The young author remained silent through these discussions, too modest, or too proud, to defend his own work. John Adams, the best orator and debater in that Congress, was protagonist. He fought for the whole document, including the slavery passage. Jefferson never failed to testify to John Adams's splendid services on those memorable days. Nor was the New Englander as a rule unappreciative of the Virginian's character and talents. "I always loved Jefferson," cried Adams, after their estrangement and reconciliation. But in a moment of vanity and jealousy (at the age of 87) he was prompted by a letter from Timothy Pickering about the Declaration of Independence to say:—

"As you justly observe there is not an idea in it but what had been hackneyed in Congress for two years before. The substance of it is contained in the declaration of rights, and the violation of those rights, in the Journals of Congress in 1774. Indeed, the essence of it is contained in a pamphlet, voted and printed by the town of Boston, before the first Congress met, composed by James Otis, as I suppose in one of his lucid intervals, and pruned and polished by Samuel Adams."

On seeing this in print Jefferson wrote with admirable restraint and good sense (August 30, 1823) to Madison:—

"Pickering's observations, and Mr. Adams' in addition, 'that it contained no new ideas, that it is a common-place compilation, its sentiments hackneyed in Congress for two years before, and its essence contained in Otis's pamphlet' may all be true. Of that I am not to be the judge. Richard Henry Lee charged it as copied from Locke's treatise on government. Otis's pamphlet I never saw, and whether I had,

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gathered my ideas from reading or reflection I do not know. I know only that I turned to neither book nor pamphlet while writing it. I did not consider it as any part of my charge to invent new ideas altogether, and to offer no sentiment which had ever been expressed before. Had Mr. Adams been so restrained, Congress would have lost the benefit of his bold and impressive advocations of the rights of Revolution. For no man's confident and fervid addresses, more than Mr. Adams', encouraged and supported us through the difficulties surrounding us, which, like the ceaseless action of gravity, weighed on us by night and by day. Yet, on the same ground we may ask, what of these elevated thoughts was new, or can be affirmed never before to have entered the conception of man?

Whether also the sentiments of Independence and the reasons for declaring it, which make so great a portion of the instrument had been 'hackneyed' in Congress for two years before the 4th of July, '76, or this dictum also of Mr. Adams be another slip of memory, let history say. This however I will say for Mr. Adams, that he supported the Declaration with zeal and ability, fighting fearlessly for every word of it."<sup>1</sup>

The hunt for a speech or pamphlet which Jefferson might have copied has failed. Everything has been ransacked. His masterpiece turns out to be just as original, or just as hackneyed as the Magna Charta. It was the product of a political genius working, under the pressure and passionate inspiration of a glorious moment in his country's history, for a cause on which he had embarked heart and soul, life and fortune. If he had brought with him his library from Monticello, and had consulted his favourite political authors, Coke, Sydney, Locke, and the rest of them, for ideas and phrases, the thing would have been a failure. It was the fruit of well-digested reading,

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson added: "Timothy thinks the instrument the better for having a fourth of it expunged. He would have thought it still better, had the other three-fourths gone out also; all but the single sentiment (the only one he approves) which recommends friendship to his dear England, whenever she is willing to be at peace with us."



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deep reflection, long and strenuous controversy, not a copy nor an imitation of the past, but a new effervescence of spirit, an expression, in language characteristic of the man and the times, of a new policy.

The Declaration was issued at a propitious moment. The Colonies were practically free of the enemy. Lord Dunmore had failed to kindle a civil or a servile war in Virginia, and the last and the most odious of its governors was about to sail home. General Howe had not yet returned from Halifax to drive Washington out of New York. Many thought the war was more than half won and independence practically achieved. So the Declaration, read by magistrates in court-houses and market places, by officers to their troops, by the clergy to their congregations, was received everywhere with joy and thanksgiving — with psalms and prayers by the Puritans of New England, who had tasted the bitterness of war; with feasting, bonfires and revelry by the livelier spirits of the South. In New York, King George's leaden statue on Bowling Green was pulled down and cast into bullets. Virginia had already struck his name from the prayer book. The Quakers indeed, whose stronghold was Pennsylvania, remained conscientiously neutral, unalterably opposed to war even for liberty and doubtful whether the new order would be an improvement on the old. Persecuted by both sides they ministered to the sick and wounded, and relieved all suffering with Christian charity. The Tories, a large minority, especially strong in the Middle States, were now forced to choose sides. Many of them had already gone into voluntary exile. Some thousands of them threw in their lot with the British forces and imparted additional bitterness to the long and doubtful struggle.

## Declaration of Independence.

*Facsimile of the original document and the handwriting of Thomas Jefferson.*

*[Original by Jefferson, dated July 26th 1776, at Philadelphia, and signed by him.]*

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for <sup>one</sup> people to  
dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to  
~~assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal~~  
station to which the laws of nature & of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect  
to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes  
which impel them to ~~the~~ separation.

We hold these truths to be <sup>self-evident</sup>, that all men are  
created equal, & independent; that ~~they are endowed by their creator with certain~~  
~~unalienable rights~~ <sup>that among these are life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness</sup>; that ~~to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, & to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles & organizing it in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety & happiness~~ <sup>providing indeed</sup>  
well debate that governments long established should not be changed for  
light & transient causes and accordingly all experience hath shewn that  
mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable than to  
right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed but







John Hancock

Robt Morris Lewis Morris  
Benjamin Rush

Benj. Franklin Saml. Chase

John Morton James Wilson

Wm Hooper Wm. W. Wood

Joseph Hewes Rich. Stockton

John Penn Jas. M. Smith

Wm. Parson Bro. Hopkinson

Thos. Stone John Hart

Geo. Taylor Abra. Clark

Wm. H. W. Button

Chas. Livingston Lyman Hall

Sam. Lewis Geo. Wallcut

[illegible]

## The Declaration of Independence

So ends the first part of Thomas Jefferson's career. He had written the Declaration of Independence; he was no longer a Colonial subject of King George the Third, no longer a citizen of the British Empire. He had transferred his allegiance from King to Congress. By his own handwriting he was a Republican.



BOOK II  
REFORMER AND GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA  
CHAPTER I

JEFFERSON'S REFORMS, 1776-1779

"And now, forsooth, takes on him to reform  
Some certain edicts and some strait decrees  
That lie too heavy on the commonwealth."

— SHAKESPEARE

THOUGH he was only thirty-three, Jefferson's reputation had spread through the revolted Colonies. After the Declaration of Independence the ball was at his feet. By the general consent of his fellow Congressmen he was marked out to lead the civil administration, as Washington had been chosen to conduct the military campaigns. Government by committees is very difficult, and Jefferson had the knowledge, resourcefulness, inexhaustible industry, tactful management of men, and skill in devising the formulas that reconcile differences, which make an ideal chairman. But two considerations decided him against the career thus opened to ambition. He could not make Philadelphia — a full ten days' journey from Monticello — his headquarters. Passionately devoted to a delicate wife, he dared not leave her and the babies alone amid all the risks of war. And even if his presence had not been so urgently needed at Monticello, he felt that Virginia, his native state, had the first call upon his patrio-

## Jefferson's Reforms

tism. Being elected member of the Virginia Legislature by his own county of Albemarle, he retired from Congress and took his seat in the House of Representatives at Williamsburg on October 7, 1776.

The path of reform is never smooth. The greater the need, the stronger the opposition. The more flagrant and numerous the abuses, the more powerful is the combination of interested parties to maintain them. Virginia was still a Colonial England, free indeed from the incubus of pauperism, but held back by the institution of negro slavery and far behind Massachusetts in education and local self-government. Its criminal laws were barbarous. Under the religious code Baptist ministers were still arrested for preaching the Gospel; Quakers could be pilloried; witches and heretics could be burnt to death; Unitarians might be punished for their opinions by three years' imprisonment, or deprived of the custody of their own children; all dissenters were liable to support the Established Church. The Justices who administered all these laws were mostly of the official religion. Property and privilege found support in the ownership of slaves and in land laws which had created by entail a territorial oligarchy. To democratise, liberalise, and humanise the laws and their administration was the task of a reformer whose ideals were equality of political rights and equality of economic opportunity. To this task Jefferson brought a marvellous consortium of talents and qualifications — popularity with the people, connections and personal friendship with the leading families, the respect of the intellectuals, legal knowledge, skill in draughtsmanship, a silken suavity of manner, an iron tenacity of purpose. Yet with all this only the courage and strength of a political Hercules would have entered the list for such labours

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at such a time. Let us endeavour with the aid of his own simple and modest Memoir to describe very briefly what he tried to do and what he accomplished.

On October 11, 1776, four days after the opening of the first session of the first Legislative Assembly of the new independent State, Jefferson introduced a bill to establish and re-organise the Courts of Justice. This was in due course passed. Next day he brought in a much more controversial measure. In the early days of the Colony individuals had procured large grants of land from the Crown, and, desiring to found great families, had settled them in English fashion on eldest sons. Thus a privileged patrician order had been formed, from which the King had habitually selected his Counsellors of State. Jefferson's Bill proposed to annul this privilege by declaring all 'tenants in tail' to hold their lands in fee simple, thus enabling landowners to divide their estates among their children. It was passed after a hard struggle. The Conservative opposition was led by Edmund Pendleton, "the ablest man in debate I have ever met with," so Jefferson wrote long afterwards:—

"If he lost the main battle he returned upon you, and regained so much of it as to make it a drawn one, by dexterous manoeuvres, skirmishes in detail, and the recovery of small advantages, which, little singly, were important all together. You never knew when you were clear of him, but were harassed by his perseverance, until the patience was worn down of all who had less of it than himself. Add to this, that he was one of the most virtuous and benevolent of men, the kindest friend, the most amiable and pleasant of companions, which ensured a favourable reception to whatever came from him."

Some of his fellow landlords never forgave Jefferson for this blow at one of their most cherished institutions.

That the whole body of Virginian law must be revised was generally agreed, and Jefferson's Bill to accomplish

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this large purpose was passed on October 24. To execute the work a committee was appointed, and eventually the task was undertaken by Pendleton, Wythe, and Jefferson. They worked at it from early in 1777 until the spring of 1779, and reported to the General Assembly in June of that year, having reduced all the British Statutes from Magna Charta downwards and all the laws of Virginia from the establishment of the Legislature in the fourth year of James the First, which they thought should be retained, into 126 Bills, making a printed folio of only 90 pages. In the apportionment of the work, writes Jefferson, "the common law and statutes to the 4 James I. (when our separate legislature was established) were assigned to me; the British statutes, from that period to the present day to Mr. Wythe; and the Virginia laws to Mr. Pendleton." As the law of descents and the criminal law fell to Jefferson, he asked his colleagues to settle the leading principles on which he should proceed. With respect to inheritance he says:—

"I proposed to abolish the law of primogeniture and to make real estate descendible in parcenary to the next of kin, as personal property is, by the statute of distribution. Mr. Pendleton wished to preserve the right of primogeniture, but seeing at once that that could not prevail, he proposed we should adopt the Hebrew principle and give a double portion to the elder son. I observed, that if the elder son could eat twice as much, or do double work it might be a natural evidence of his right to a double portion; but being on a par, in his powers and wants, with his brothers and sisters, he should be on a par also in the partition of the patrimony; and such was the decision of the other members."

1779  
In the matter of crimes and their punishment Jefferson was a disciple of Beccaria. It was agreed that the punishment of death should be abolished except for treason and murder. In revising the later statutes Jefferson took

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care to reform the language, considering that obscurity and tautology ought to be removed from the laws of his country. But what was good for the country might be bad for litigation, and there was a long delay before the revised laws were adopted. At last in 1785 "by the unwearied exertions of Mr. Madison in opposition to the endless quibbles, chicaneries, perversions, vexations and delays of lawyers and demi-lawyers most of the Bills were passed by the legislature and with little alteration."

(The Committee for revising the laws agreed that a systematic scheme of general education should be proposed. Accordingly Jefferson prepared three Bills to provide for the education of the whole people. The first divided the counties into hundreds or wards, each of which was to have an elementary school, where reading, writing, and arithmetic should be taught. At the same time it divided the State into 24 districts, each with a higher school for more advanced instruction. The Second Bill proposed to amend and enlarge William and Mary College — in fact to make it a University. The third provided for the establishment of a public library — an extraordinary innovation. But Jefferson had over-estimated the intelligence of the Assembly. Not one of the three Bills was placed on the Statute book. At last in 1796 his Elementary Education Bill was passed, but with an amendment making its adoption optional in each county. Jefferson's Bill had thrown the cost of the schools on the inhabitants in proportion to their taxable capacity, thus making wealth contribute to the education of the poor. Consequently, he says, "the Justices being generally of the more wealthy class were unwilling to incur that burden, and I believe it was not suffered to commence in a single county." The 'amendment' therefore destroyed the Bill.)

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The Bill consolidating the laws of slavery in Virginia was a mere digest. Jefferson's plan for the emancipation and subsequent emigration of all slaves born after a certain date found no sufficient support. "The public mind would not bear the proposition," so he wrote in 1821, "nor will it bear it even to this day. Yet the day is not distant when it must bear and adopt it, or worse will follow. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free."

If Jefferson could have shewn his opponents through a glass the battle fields round Richmond, they might have been more willing to provide for the extinction of white ignorance and black slavery. But in every age and every country the prophet is without honour; the golden gift of social vision possessed by a few rare spirits is neither prized nor understood by the many.

One other Bill, the most famous and glorious of all, was drawn up by Jefferson to crown his scheme of reformation. When he joined the new legislature in October, 1776, petitions were pouring in from dissenting bodies all over Virginia demanding the disestablishment and disendowment of the Anglican — now the Episcopal — Church. The petitions were referred to a Committee of the whole House. "After desperate conflicts," lasting from October 11 to December 5, they prevailed so far only as to repeal the laws which rendered criminal the maintenance of unorthodox religious opinions, or failure to attend church, or the exercise of other modes of worship than that established. Dissenters were also exempted from contributing to the support of the Episcopal Church. The controversy dragged on until 1779, when Disestablishment was finally carried.

But this practical achievement was far from satisfying

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Jefferson, who was ambitious that Virginia should subscribe and testify to his own ideal of perfect toleration. He therefore prepared a Magna Charta of religious liberty entitled 'A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom,' better known by the celebrated inscription on his tombstone as 'the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom.' This was left with the revised laws for subsequent adoption by the Legislature. But when the war was over, the Presbyterians and many other dissenters united with the disestablished Episcopalians of Virginia in a demand for state support; and in 1784 a measure was proposed to establish a provision for teachers of the Christian Religion by a general assessment on taxpayers. This movement was backed by George Washington, Patrick Henry, and Richard H. Lee. Jefferson was Minister in France. In his absence the opposition, led by James Madison, George Mason, and George Nicholas, gained the day; and in 1786 Jefferson's Bill for religious Freedom was passed by the Assembly. Before victory was achieved, when writing his *Notes on Virginia* (in 1781), Jefferson took occasion to expound the true philosophy of toleration in an argument of much force and passion, which was often quoted against him by political theologians: —

"The error," he observes, "seems not sufficiently eradicated, that the operations of the mind, as well as the acts of the body, are subject to the coercion of the laws. But our rulers can have no authority over such natural rights, only as we have submitted to them. The rights of conscience we never submitted; we could not submit. We are answerable for them to our God. The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others, but it does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg. If it be said, his testimony in a court of my justice cannot be relied on, reject it then, and be the stigma on him. Constraint may make him worse by making him a hypocrite, but it will

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never make him a truer man. It may fix him obstinately in his errors, but will not cure them. Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error. Give a loose to them, they will support the true religion by bringing every false one to their tribunal, to the test of their investigation. They are the natural enemies of error, and of error only. Had not the Roman government permitted free inquiry, Christianity could never have been introduced. Had not free inquiry been indulged at the era of the Reformation, the corruptions of Christianity could not have been purged away. If it be restrained now, the present corruptions will be protected, and new ones encouraged. Was the government to prescribe to us our medicine and diet, our bodies would be in such keeping as our souls are now. . . . Government is just as infallible, too when it fixes systems in physics. Galileo was sent to the Inquisition for affirming that the earth was a sphere; the government had declared it to be flat as a trencher, and Galileo was obliged to abjure his error. This error, however, at length prevailed, the earth became a globe, and Descartes declared it was whirled round its axle by a vortex. The government in which he lived was wise enough to see that this was no question of civil jurisdiction, or we should all have been involved by authority in vortices. In fact, the vortices have been exploded, and the Newtonian principle of gravitation is now more firmly established, on the basis of reason, than it would be were the government to step in, and make it an article of necessary faith. Reason and experiment have been indulged and error has fled before them. It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself.

“Subject opinion to coercion: whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men; men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? To produce uniformity. But is uniformity of opinion desirable? No more than of face and stature. Difference of opinion is advantageous in religion. . . .

“Is uniformity attainable? Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch towards uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half of the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth. Let us reflect that it is inhabited by a thousand million of people; that these profess probably a thousand different systems of religion; that ours is but one of that thousand; that if there be but one right, and ours that one, we should wish to see



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the nine hundred and ninety-nine wandering sects gathered into the fold of truth. But against such a majority we cannot effect this by force. Reason and persuasion are the only practicable instruments. To make way for these, free inquiry must be indulged; and how can we wish others to indulge it while we refuse it ourselves? But every State, says an inquisitor, has established some religion. No two, say I, have established the same. Is this a proof of the infallibility of establishment?"

Jefferson went beyond Milton or Locke. His thoughts on liberty rose from earth to heaven. His toleration knew no limits, was hampered by no religious prejudices or reasons of state. Here we have Jefferson's *Areopagitica*. Not satisfied with a mere conventional state of toleration he wished to establish perfect freedom of conscience on a legal foundation. And his wish was gratified, to their enduring credit, by his fellow countrymen in Virginia. His noble statute, a monument to Jefferson's fame more durable than any bronze effigy, I shall venture to transcribe in full, those words of the original draft which were struck out in the Bill as enacted being printed in italics:—

### A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom.

Well aware *that the opinions and belief of men depend not on their own will, but follow involuntarily the evidence proposed to their minds*; that Almighty God hath created the mind free, *and manifested his supreme will that free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint*; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion, who being Lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do, *but to extend its influence on reason alone*; that the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes

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of thinking as the only true and infallible; and as such endeavouring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time: that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves *and abhors*, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness, and is withdrawing from the ministry those *temporary* rewards, which, proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement to earnest and unremitting labors for the instruction of mankind; that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, *any* more than our opinions in physics or geometry; that, therefore, the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow-citizens, he has a natural right; that it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing, with a monopoly of worldly honours and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it; that though indeed these are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way; *that the opinions of men are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction*; that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles, on [the] supposition of their ill tendency is a dangerous fallacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty, because he being of course judge of that tendency will make his opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own; that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order; and finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate; errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.

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*WE, the General Assembly of Virginia, do enact,* That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

And though we know well that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare this act irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted, are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.

On the passing of the statute in 1786 Jefferson, who was Minister in Paris, had it printed in English and in a French translation. It went through several editions in both languages, and did, we may be sure, good service to the cause of religious liberty in Europe as well as in America.

Though the form of a statute does not lend itself to fine composition, yet Jefferson's style and language while falling far short of the grandeur of the *Areopagitica* deserve their meed of praise. But it is for its contents that this Act claims immortality among human ordinances. The first law ever passed by a popular Assembly giving perfect freedom of conscience places its author among the great liberators of mankind.

It may be said of Jefferson as truly as of Milton that his love of liberty was never merely political. He cared as much for the freedom and independence of the mind as for the freedom and independence of the state. He was as eager to safeguard the individual from the tyranny of priests and politicians as to liberate the nation from foreign oppression.

## CHAPTER II

GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA JUNE, 1779 TO JUNE, 1781

"Then to advise how war may best, upheld,  
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold."

— MILTON

ON the retirement of Patrick Henry, its first Governor under the new order, the Assembly of Virginia had to elect a successor. Jefferson was candidate of the Reformers; his old friend John Page was nominated by the Conservatives. The candidates took no part, though their supporters canvassed vigorously. On June 1, 1779, Jefferson was elected by a small majority. In reply to Page's congratulations he regretted that the zeal of their respective friends should have placed them in competition. "I was comforted, however, with the reflection, that it was their competition, not ours, and that the difference of the numbers, which decided between us, was too insignificant to give you a pain, or me a pleasure, had our dispositions towards each other been such as to admit those sensations." Twenty-three years later Page was appointed Governor and received a letter of congratulation from President Jefferson.

On this occasion Page had good reason to rejoice that he was not elected.

Conditions in Virginia were very bad and destined to become much worse. In May, the very last month of Patrick Henry's administration, the British had used their

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command of the sea to make their first big raid on Virginia. An expedition under Admiral Collier had entered Hampton Roads and seized Portsmouth. From this base plundering parties went out in various directions. One marched on Suffolk, the chief military depôt of Virginia, dispersed a force of 2,000 militiamen, and destroyed large quantities of food and ammunition. Jefferson might well, in his speech of acceptance, mingle thanks for the honour bestowed upon him with anxiety "lest my poor endeavours should fall short of the kind expectations of my country." The second Governor of the State could with confidence promise "impartiality, assiduous attention, and sincere affection to the great American Cause." But he inherited a rapidly depreciating currency and an empty Treasury. When he took office the Governor's salary of £4,500 in paper money did not pay for the food of his household. His second year's salary was equivalent to the price of a saddle. Another inheritance was a territory exposed to the attacks of a Sea Power and without means of defence; for throughout his term of office Washington insisted that Virginia, instead of making preparations against raids, should devote her resources to the support of the main armies operating in the north and in the south. Jefferson played the part assigned to him with perfect loyalty. Fortune so contrived that the future protagonist of state rights was bound while Governor to sacrifice the security of his beloved Virginia to the necessities, real or supposed, of the Union, and in so doing to run the gauntlet of much unpopularity at home. Had he remained in office six months longer, Jefferson could have celebrated the glorious termination at Yorktown of a strategy which had involved heavy losses to his own people, losses from which one of his own properties never fully recovered. That unmerited

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reproaches, which cut him to the quick, were cast upon him when he retired is not at all surprising. That after his conduct had been justified they should have been revived later on by party venom with additional charges of cowardice was in the nature of things. But that they should still be popping up in the literature of our own time is a little puzzling and disheartening. Evidently the victory of Truth in history may be long delayed by the lingering prejudices of party controversy.

To understand the story of Jefferson's governorship we must go back to October 17, 1777, when Burgoyne capitulated to Gates at Saratoga. It was the turning point in the war; for it enabled Franklin to conclude that alliance with the French monarchy which eventually deprived King George of his Colonies, and then by ruining the public finances of France set in train a new revolution which was to deprive the French King of his head.

After Saratoga a real peace effort was made by Lord North. He offered to abandon all that the British Crown had originally fought for, if the Colonies would remain within the British Empire. But the compact with France, which stipulated that the war should continue until independence was achieved, made an accommodation impossible.

After that disaster to British arms the war languished, and interest shifted gradually from the north to the south. In Europe Saratoga was thought to have ensured American independence, and so in the end it did by procuring the French Alliance. But at first French aid barely kept the Republican cause on its legs. A year after Saratoga Washington was in the depth of despondency. Prices were rising fast, as paper money depreciated, demoralising trade and spreading ruin among the people. Drastic

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taxation would have arrested the mischief; but the individual States refused to impose it, and Congress was powerless. Without French munitions, loans, and subsidies, the American armies could not have been maintained. In December, 1778, Washington wrote: "Our affairs are in a more distressed, ruinous, and deplorable condition than they have been since the commencement of the war. . . . The common interests of America are mouldering and sinking into irretrievable ruin, if a remedy is not soon applied." The value of money, he declared, was sinking fifty per cent a day in Philadelphia.

Clinton had succeeded Howe as British Commander-in-Chief, with Cornwallis as his second in command. Philadelphia had been abandoned by the British forces, which were now concentrated in New York. In the month of June, 1779, Spain joined in the Alliance against Great Britain. Yet George III was still obstinately bent on subjugating his rebellious subjects — though France and Spain were leagued against England with the thirteen revolted Colonies, and Holland was about to join her foes. To judge from the gloom of Washington's letters and the economic exhaustion of the American States the King might still hope for success. In 1779, 140 million continental paper dollars were printed by Congress, and their exchange value fell till twenty paper dollars went to one of silver. That was bad enough, but worse followed. Early in 1780 Congress made an open confession of bankruptcy by calling in its "continentals" at the rate of one hard dollar to forty paper dollars. A few months before it had described any such measure in advance as that of "a bankrupt, faithless Republic." Multitudes of people, including many French merchants, were victims of this gigantic swindle. The new currency, of course, went the

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way of the old. It was a fraud that could not be repeated. Public credit was gone. After this both Congress and the States had to rely on other means than the printing of paper money. Except for the hard cash of French subsidies and loans, almost everything required for the war, from men and horses to clothing and food, had to be 'impressed.' That meant injustice, unequal suffering, discontents, disorders, and even insurrections.

The Continental Army in the spring of 1779 numbered only about 16,000. Officers and men were alike disheartened. Washington described his forces as "but little more than the skeleton of an army." In the south the English had won successes in Georgia, and in 1779 they overran South Carolina, where they found plenty of loyalists to join them. A French-American attack on Savannah was beaten off, and at the end of the year Clinton embarked from New York with 7,000 men for the purpose of conquering the Southern Colonies. After a long and brave defence Charleston capitulated in May, 1780, with a garrison of 5,000 and 400 cannon. Saratoga was avenged. All Southern Carolina seemed ready to submit. For a time loyalists flocked to the royal standard. But plunder following in the wake of victory exasperated the people, and converted some of the Tory zealots into rebel Whigs. In June Clinton returned to New York, leaving Cornwallis with 4,000 men to subdue North Carolina. Cornwallis was a dashing general, but his methods were the methods of barbarism. Resistance gathered strength. Washington despatched Baron de Kalb, a good soldier, with 2,000 regulars from the Continental army to assist Gates, the not very competent victor of Saratoga, to whom Congress had assigned the Chief Command in the South. That general soon had at his disposal, thanks to

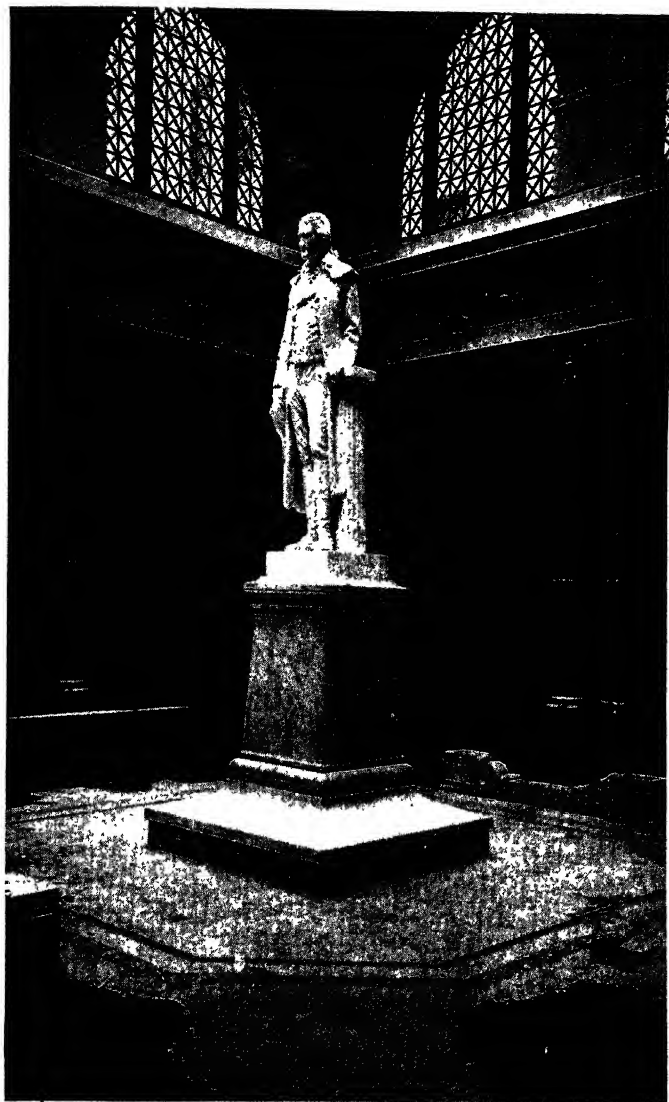


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the efforts of Washington and Jefferson, a force of regulars and militiamen which outnumbered Cornwallis. The two armies met at Camden on August 16, 1780. A panic seized the Virginian militia, and the whole American army was routed. It looked as if Cornwallis, with both the Carolinas at his feet, could now march on to conquer Virginia. But the tide again turned. Many of the dispersed soldiers were rallied. Gates was succeeded by Nathanael Greene, a brilliant general.

The official correspondence between Jefferson, Washington, Steuben, Gates, and Greene affords sufficient proof of the tireless energy with which Jefferson was directing a stream of men, horses, food, and munitions to the Southern army in the critical months that followed the rout of Gates at Camden. Greene's biographer, Johnson, has done justice to Jefferson. "Never," he writes, "did an officer of the United States experience more cordial and zealous support than that which Greene at this time received from Governor Jefferson. . . . Every requisition of the Commanding General was promptly complied with, the Militia of the neighbouring counties ordered into the field, and several active and spirited measures pursued for replenishing Washington's corps of horse." If Greene had been imbued with an equally generous spirit, he would not have desisted from the pursuit of Cornwallis, leaving Virginia to be invaded and devastated in order to pursue the easier task of reconquering Southern Carolina and Georgia.

But we are anticipating. In the winter of 1780-1781 Washington was still waiting for French aid. He was too weak to attack New York, and the English garrison was too weak to engage him. In December, 1780, Alexander Hamilton wrote despairingly from his winter quarters in Morristown: "I find our prospects are infinitely worse



STATUE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON IN THE JEFFERSON HOTEL, RICHMOND



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than they have been at any period of the war." He saw starving troops, empty magazines, and a total want of money or credit to replenish them; he even anticipated "a dissolution of the army for want of subsistence." And he was not far wrong; for in 1781 there broke out — to quote John Marshall's *Life of Washington* — "an open and almost universal revolt of the line." A dissolution of Washington's whole army was only avoided by a discharge of the Pennsylvania troops. Unpaid, half starved and half clothed, the American soldiers everywhere were in miserable plight. Lafayette, we know, could only supply his own men with shoes and shirts by pledging his private fortune. "Scarce any State in the Union," wrote Washington in May, 1781, the last month of Jefferson's Governorship, "has at this hour an eighth part of its quota in the field." Yet Jefferson's latest critic, Dr. Eckenrode, complains that the British invasions found Virginia "unprepared." The Governor, he suggests, should before this have collected — by force I suppose, because there was no other way — "tobacco, flour and beef" and shipped it to France in payment for arms; as if he had ships, as if the British Navy were non-existent, as if he were Commander-in-Chief, and as if he had not been despatching all the food, clothing, waggons, munitions, etc., he could collect in loyal response to Washington's commands and the entreaties of Gates or Greene to supply the Southern armies which were holding back Cornwallis. These frantic efforts to build up a case against Jefferson all end in nothing. The mountain labours, and only mice emerge.

All through the winter of 1780-1781 discontent and disillusionment prevailed through the length and breadth of the Union. It looked as if Lord North's overtures should have been accepted two years before; nor did the clouds

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lift until Cornwallis retreated before Lafayette and a great French fleet under Admiral De Grasse with six thousand soldiers put in to the Chesapeake at the end of August, 1781, too late indeed to save Virginia from invasion or Jefferson from the mortification of seeing his countryside laid waste, but in time to strike a final blow. On Oct. 19, the army of Cornwallis, which had invaded and terrorized Virginia, surrendered at Yorktown, and the War of Independence was practically over four months after Jefferson's retirement from the Governorship.

But what of affairs in Virginia, and of Jefferson, who in the absence of Washington was the leading figure in the State, first as reformer, then as Governor and civil administrator? We have seen what he accomplished as reformer. Of his conduct as Governor we have ample evidence not only in the pages of Randall, most veracious and painstaking of biographers, but in Jefferson's correspondence which during the period of his Governorship — from June, 1779 to June, 1781 — was mainly official. He was overwhelmed with work. Of his energy, of his desperate difficulties, of the administrative ability and courage which he displayed throughout, of his long-suffering patience and consideration for others, only those who have read his letters and read them carefully can judge. Certainly in the reproaches cast upon him there is no sign that his critics have performed this task — an essential condition surely before any jury of honest men can pronounce verdict. It is true that, until the memorial edition printed for the first time in 1907 a number of Jefferson's letters to governors, generals, and subordinate officials from the collection in the Virginia State library, the volume and character of his work was not wholly known. But

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there never was any excuse for the charges made against him.

For several months after taking office Jefferson resided at Williamsburg, occupying the palace long inhabited by British viceroys, where as an undergraduate he had fiddled in Fauquier's amateur orchestra. Early in 1780 the seat of government was removed on his initiative to Richmond as being more salubrious, more central, and less exposed to the enemy, who, in virtue of their naval supremacy, commanded all the coasts and navigable rivers.

At first, the Collier raid being over, the Governor's chief difficulties were financial. He at once set about measures for increasing taxation and selling land. By these means he hoped "to co-operate with our sister States in reducing the enormous sums of money in circulation. Every other remedy is nonsensical quackery." Already in this first month of his administration (June, 1779) he had penetrated the mystery of inconvertible paper money, which baffled so many statesmen and pseudo-economists in his day and has baffled so many more since. He saw that resort to the printing press for money is a device which destroys the revenue it is meant to provide and ends by ruining public and private credit. What was to be done, he asked: "Taxation is become of no account; for it is foreseen that, notwithstanding its increased amount, there will still be a greater deficiency than ever. I own I see no assured hope but in peace, or a plentiful loan of hard money."

Indian warfare on the western frontier of Virginia gave the Governor constant anxiety. On the British side Hamilton, military Governor of Detroit, who had great influence over the tribes and no scruples in promoting savage

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warfare, had been a most active and dangerous foe; but luckily for Jefferson, Colonel George Rogers Clark, in the spring of 1779, by a wonderful march of sixteen days through what is now Illinois, surprised Hamilton and captured him in the fort of Vincennes. Clark proposed to follow up his success by an expedition against Detroit, which he thought might put an end to the Indian war. Jefferson embraced the project, but it was long before he could persuade Washington to grant the needful aids. Clark was called the "Hannibal of the West" by John Randolph of Roanoke, because "the march of that great man and his brave companions in arms across the drowned lands of the Wabash does not shrink from a comparison with the passage of the Thrasymene Marsh." Hamilton, who had offered rewards for scalps but none for prisoners, was put in irons by Jefferson's orders — a just requital for the barbarities practised by his Indian auxiliaries against frontier farmers. It is pleasant to add that, when the British and German prisoners taken at Saratoga were removed to a camp near Monticello, Jefferson exerted himself in every way to provide for their health and comfort. Among his letters is one to Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia, urging that these captive enemies should be treated with the utmost generosity, and that everything possible should be done to mitigate the horrors of war. A certain incompetent commissary had stated that the camp ought to be shifted because it was badly situated for provisions. After putting the official's commercial geography right Jefferson observed with unusual severity: "if the troops could be fed on long letters, I believe the gentleman at the head of that department in this country would be the best commissary on earth."

The harvest of 1779 was a bad one in Virginia. Disaffec-

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tion followed distress, and both were aggravated as time went on by the impressment of men, horses, and provisions for the northern and southern armies. In November, Jefferson described his difficulties to Washington, and wrote to the French minister, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, suggesting (but in vain) that the French fleet should winter in York river in order to protect the Virginian coast. His letters to Washington and indeed to all the generals and governors with whom he was communicating are very clear and businesslike. In April, 1780, he explains to the Commander-in-Chief the state of recruiting; in June he complains of the defective communication between north and south: "though Charlestown has been in the hands of the enemy a month, we hear nothing of their movements which can be relied on." He was establishing a line of expresses, by which he hoped to get intelligence from the south at the rate of 120 miles in 24 hours. "I wish it were possible that a like speedy line of communication could be formed from hence to your Excellency's headquarters." He seems to have been more alive than the military men to the importance of rapid intelligence; and often asks why responsible officers fail to communicate their own movements and those of the enemy — though each was ready enough to complain if as a result of his own or another's remissness he did not get all he wanted from the civil authorities.

All through the summer and autumn of 1780, and indeed right on to the spring of 1781, Jefferson was making tremendous exertions to assist the armies in North Carolina. In June, 1780, he tells Washington: "all the waggons we can collect have been furnished to the Marquis de Kalb and are assembled for the march of 2,500 men under General Stevens of Culpeper." He has written to Congress



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for cartridge paper and other munitions. The want of money, which cramped every effort, was being supplied by force (*i.e.* impressment), "the most unpalatable of all substitutes." If arms could be furnished from the North he thought that Virginia and North Carolina could embody immediately from ten to fifteen thousand militia.

All this time Washington was perplexed by the rival claims of North and South. Which theatre of war deserved most attention? On this question Jefferson wrote him a most sympathetic letter in July. Now that Clinton had returned from Charleston to the North, Jefferson was willing that Virginia should contribute to the Northern army if Washington should so decide. Then, as always, he was ready to place the general interests of the Union in its campaign for independence above the comfort, convenience, and even the security of Virginia. But he felt that Congress was too much inclined to divert money, men, and stores to the North. All the moneys from Maryland southwards — so he wrote to James Madison (Richmond, July 26, 1780) — should be given to the southern military-chest. "It could not be expected that North Carolina, which contains but a tenth of the American militia, should be left to support the southern war alone." History confirms this judgment; for from that time onwards the decisive events of the war occurred in the South. The rout of Gates at Camden on August 16, 1780, was a bitter disappointment to poor Jefferson, who had toiled so hard to furnish Gates with men, food, and equipment. Yet he wasted no time in vain regrets or reproaches, but set to work at once with all energy to repair the disaster, and wrote to tell Washington (September 3), "as I know the anxiety you must have felt since the late misfortune to the South," that the fugitives were being rallied and that an-

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other army was being collected which would soon number 8,000 men. At the same time he was calling out 2,000 militia; but they were unarmed. "Almost the whole small arms seem to have been lost in the late rout," and only 3,000 stand of arms were left in the Virginian magazine. He had written pressing to Congress, lest in case of another disaster Virginia might be left without means of resistance. At the same time he despatched words of cheer to General Stevens, who had commanded the militia:—"Instead of considering what is past we are to look forward and prepare for the future. . . . We shall exert every nerve to assist you in every way in our power." He advised Stevens to courtmartial all the Virginian run-aways and "make them soldiers for eight months." It was reported that four hundred wagons and teams, including two of Jefferson's, had been lost at Camden. There was not a shilling in the Treasury; but "we have ordered an active quartermaster to go to the west and endeavour to purchase or impress 100 wagons and teams." It seems odd that at this late stage of the war Washington's generals in the South should have been unprovided with maps. In September, Jefferson was being asked by Gates to supply not only boats, wagons, arms, tents, militiamen, and beeves, but also maps of Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

A few weeks later General Nathaniel Greene passed through Virginia on his way to supersede Gates. Greene was just as exigent as Gates, and Jefferson was just as zealous in stripping Virginia of everything available for his support. During the summer, he told Washington, Virginia had sent 7,000 stand of arms southward; and

<sup>1</sup> Just before his retirement Gates received from Jefferson a map of Virginia with newspapers "in which you will find a detail of (Benedict) Arnold's apostasy and villainy."

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7,000 regulars and militiamen had been ordered into the southern service. But as only 3,000 could be armed, he naturally pressed headquarters to replenish the Virginia magazine and furnish transportation to enable him to supply the southern army with provisions. At the same time he again urged that the French fleet should winter in the Chesapeake, where indeed its presence might have afforded invaluable protection against the coming raids.

We now come to the British raids on Virginia, which furnished Jefferson's enemies then and afterwards with the oft-repeated charge that he failed to protect his own state.

On October 22, 1780, information reached Richmond that a British fleet of about sixty sail had arrived, and was disembarking light horse at Portsmouth. In a letter of the same day communicating the bad news to Washington, we have a taste of Jefferson's spirit:—

"We are endeavouring to collect as large a body to oppose them as we can arm: this will be lamentably inadequate, if the enemy be in any force. It is mortifying to suppose that a people, able and zealous to contend with their enemy, should be reduced to fold their arms for want of means of defence. Yet no resources, that we know of, insure us against this event. It has become necessary to divert to this new object a considerable part of the aids we had destined for General Gates. We are still, however, sensible of the necessity of supporting him, and have left that part of the country nearest him uncalled on, at present, that they may reinforce him as soon as arms can be received. We have called to the command of our forces G<sup>énéral</sup> Weeden and Muhlenberg of the line, and Nelson and Stevens of the militia. You will be pleased to make to these such additions as you may think proper. As to the aids of men, I ask for none, knowing that if the late detachment of the enemy shall have left it safe for you to spare aids of that kind, you will not await my application. Of the troops we shall raise, there is not a single man who ever saw the face of the enemy."

Critics have questioned Jefferson's statement that it was impossible for him to ensure Virginia against an attack

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in force. Yet his opinion was shared by Washington, himself a Virginian landowner and surveyor; and it was an essential part of Washington's policy that all his good troops should operate either in the South or in the North, and that Virginia, instead of trying to protect itself against raids from the sea, should devote all its resources to the northern and southern campaigns. This first raid under General Leslie only lasted about a fortnight; but it proved, if further proof were required, that the British, so long as they retained command of the seas, could land at any point on the coast and could for a time do what they liked in the absence of any strong force of regulars in Virginia. Jefferson always had with him one or more of Washington's Generals, besides Nelson (his successor in the Governorship) to whom he had entrusted the command of the local militia. In these generals he confided. They were his military advisers. He kept in constant touch with them, giving them every possible encouragement; and I have seen no indication that any one of them made any suggestion for the defence of Virginia which was not attempted or carried out. Three Generals — Steuben, Muhlenberg, and Nelson — were all on the spot during these raids. They were the commanding officers responsible for organising all the resistance that was possible; for driving back the invaders, or for failing to drive them back. It is true that until Lafayette arrived in the summer of 1781 with a few regular troops — too few and too late to save Richmond from Cornwallis, or Charlottesville from Tarleton — no effective resistance was made to the British commanders who successively raided and devastated Virginia. But if it is necessary to explain the misfortunes of Virginia in 1781 by the incompetence of Jefferson, what are we to say of Washington, under whose

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instructions he acted, or of Steuben, Muhlenberg, and Nelson, to whom Washington and Jefferson had entrusted the military defence of the state? If the military policy was wrong, the responsibility was Washington's; if its execution was wrong, the chief responsibility lay upon Steuben, Muhlenberg, and Nelson. There is ample and overwhelming testimony that Jefferson co-operated zealously with them from first to last, and not a scrap of evidence that he ever failed them. We may assert without any shadow of doubt that the Governor and Council and legislature of Virginia, acting with and on the advice of its military authorities, made every practicable effort (subject to the dispositions, instructions, advice, and requisitions of Washington, Gates, and Greene) to raise, discipline, and equip troops for the defence of Virginia. To embody militiamen without arms would have been a work of stupid supererogation. Indeed, by the autumn of 1780 the government of Virginia had gone so far in drafting men and impressing horses, wagons, etc., that the people of Virginia, who at the outset of the war had been singularly free from Tory loyalism, were becoming dangerously disaffected. At the end of October, 1780, in view of the risk of invasion, Jefferson decided to remove the Saratoga prisoners of war from Albemarle county, not only because he saw risks of desertion but also because, as he put it, of "the extensive disaffection which has of late been discovered and the total lack of arms in the hands of our good people." An insurrection in Montgomery county had been so roughly suppressed by Colonel Charles Lynch, Superintendent of the lead mines, that in October it was thought necessary by the Virginia Assembly to pass a special act of immunity. The Colonel's name has been immortalised, if we are to accept the view that "lynch

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law" is derived from his methods on that occasion. Evidence of the disaffection has been collected in Dr. Eckenrode's book on the Revolution in Virginia. The miseries of compulsory service, the curse of paper money, and the increasing impressment of horses and other supplies all contributed to diminish enthusiasm for the Republican cause and to revive regrets for the good old days when Virginia was loyal, peaceful, and prosperous.

Official returns show that Virginia contributed more during the first year of Jefferson's administration to "continental" expenses and requisitions than Congress had demanded. In 1780 it had 4,500 regulars in the field and 5,500 militiamen in continental service, of whom only a handful were left in Virginia to guard the Convention prisoners at Charlottesville. Indeed the people's complaint against their governor at this time was not that he had done too little for the war but that he had done too much, and that the sacrifices he was exacting were too heavy. Some of the impressment officers employed rough-and-ready methods which gave much offence; and in the following spring Jefferson had to warn General Greene more than once about the misconduct of agents who had been entrusted with the execution of impress warrants for taking horses in Virginia. To take a horse from a Virginian was a delicate and dangerous operation — more dangerous if not more difficult than the proverbial one of robbing a Highlander of his breeks.

Virginia's hour of trial and suffering began at the end of December, 1780. On the 15th of that month Jefferson wrote to inform Washington of a dangerous forward movement by the British and Indians on the western frontier from Fort Detroit. Virginia could afford to wait no longer, and they were preparing to launch the expedition under

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Colonel Clark which had been so long under contemplation. At the same time he pointed out the danger from the British Army in the South and the inadequacy of the forces in Virginia, which left no hope of effectual resistance. It was to be expected, he added, "that the scene of war will either be within our country or very nearly advanced to it, and that our principal dependence will be our militia." He was busily fulfilling the requisitions of General Greene, who had just passed through Virginia to take up the command in North Carolina.

A few days later Jefferson received a circular letter from General Washington (dated December 9, 1780) to the Governors of the Southern States, saying that an expedition was supposed to be preparing at New York and that it was supposed to be destined for the southward. Washington does not seem to have thought much of the report, or to have had any particular anxiety about Virginia; for in a letter written at the same time to Steuben he mentions the report quite casually, adding that the enemy's destination was "conjectured to be southward." He does not suggest that Steuben should make any special preparations. Probably he thought that an expedition, if it went anywhere, would go to Charleston to support Cornwallis, whose vanguard had suffered a sharp reverse in October at the battle of King's Mountain, and was about to suffer another at Cowpens.<sup>1</sup> However, on December 30 a British fleet of twenty-seven sail, bearing the traitor Arnold with a picked force of over 1,600 men, was sighted off the Capes of Virginia. The news reached Jefferson next day. He immediately informed General Steuben, and despatched General Nelson to the lower country with full powers. Nelson, it should be added, at the request of the

<sup>1</sup> January 17, 1781.

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executive in the previous summer had concerted with the county lieutenants in Lower Virginia what measures should be taken when invasion threatened. Nelson failed to keep Jefferson informed. The legislature was in session at Richmond; but no more was heard until January 2, when a messenger brought the news that it was an enemy fleet and was moving up the James river. Thus two precious days were lost. Thereupon, advised by Steuben, Jefferson called up 4,700 militia. The members of the legislature adjourned and scattered to their homes. Arnold had embarked his force of regulars in light vessels which, aided by wind and tide, were ascending the river almost as fast as express messengers could ride. On January 3 Jefferson learned that Arnold was anchored off Jamestown, as if to attack Williamsburg; but at 5 A.M. on the 4th, news came that the enemy was at Kennon's, which meant a raid on either Petersburg or Richmond. The whole militia of the adjacent counties were then ordered out. At Hoods the British vessels were fired on; but a force landed and drove off the garrison. On the afternoon of January 5 the enemy disembarked at Westover and made for Richmond. Meanwhile Jefferson and Steuben had been removing public stores from the village capital. Jefferson worked without intermission. After sending his wife and three children to a place of safety on the morning of the sixth he galloped to Manchester opposite Richmond. His horse on the way fell dead with fatigue. Mounting another he reached Manchester and saw the enemy in Richmond on the opposite bank of the James. Arnold had marched from Westover on the fourth, arriving at Richmond about noon on the fifth, where Steuben, uncertain until the last moment of the enemy's destination, had only scraped together about 200 militiamen, who of



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course could offer no opposition. From Richmond Arnold sent Colonel Simcoe to destroy the public foundry and laboratory at Westham, and other property. Jefferson rode to Chetwood and joined Steuben in the evening. Next day (January 6), Arnold, after burning some public and private property in Richmond and seizing such stores of tobacco and provisions as he could carry away, commenced his retreat and was at Westover on the seventh. A couple of thousand militiamen or more were now assembling from various quarters in pursuit; but the wind veering suddenly from west to east, Arnold got clear away with trifling loss. Jefferson crossed from Manchester to Richmond on the morning of the eighth and resumed his official work, after spending the greater part of four days in the saddle.

So ended Arnold's raid. The traitor, a very competent commander, had done a good deal of damage in a very short time, and had got back to his base at Portsmouth unscathed. He had insulted the pride of the Virginians, and had done something to interrupt supplies and reinforcements for General Greene.

Let us now examine very briefly the charge that on this occasion Governor Jefferson "permitted" Virginia to be invaded and its capital to be occupied. Nobody by the way has complained that the Governors of North and South Carolina extended over and over again similar "permissions" to the British forces, or that the Governors of most of the northern states had done the same. But Colonel Henry Lee, known as "Legion Harry," who fought in North Carolina with conspicuous gallantry and less admirable ferocity, seems to have had a personal grudge against Jefferson, and chose to blame the Governor for not defending Virginia against Arnold. In his "Mem-

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oires of the War in the Southern Department of the United States" Lee declares that Jefferson should have erected forts and floating batteries on the navigable rivers and that he should have maintained a "legionary corps," which "under a soldier of genius would have been amply sufficient to preserve the State from insult and injuries."<sup>1</sup> If Jefferson had been Aladdin, he might with the help of the Wonderful Lamp have produced the forts and the floating batteries (or even a navy, which would have been better still) and the legionary corps, and above all the soldier of genius. But as he was only a civil Governor, with no magical powers, without regular soldiers or arms to man the forts, or the means of constructing them, we can hardly blame him. Besides, if a fine corps of well-trained cavalry and infantry could have been raised, it would certainly have been sent by Washington and Steuben to the North Carolina frontier to help in driving back Cornwallis. We must remember that in spite of several checks Cornwallis with his small regular army had pursued Greene, a fine soldier, 200 miles across the Dan into Virginia, and that on March 15 he drove Greene's army (double the strength of his own and strongly posted) out of its positions. Yet his army was not very much larger than Arnold's! We must remember, too, that at the Battle of Guildford Court House, the costly victory which proved to be a defeat for Cornwallis, Greene's army was mainly composed of Virginian regulars and militiamen. On receiving Greene's despatches, Washington wrote, April 18: "I am much pleased to find by your letter that the State of Virginia exerts itself to your satisfaction."

Next let us see what Washington thought about the Arnold raid. Did he blame Jefferson and Steuben and

<sup>1</sup> See Lee's 'Memoirs,' p. 194 sqq.

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Nelson for reinforcing Greene against a certain and formidable foe rather than making preparations against a raid which might or might not take place at any time at any point on the coast? On February 6, 1781, Washington wrote to Jefferson about Arnold's raid: "It is mortifying to see so inconsiderable a party<sup>1</sup> committing extensive depredations with impunity; but, considering the situation of your State, it is matter of wonder that you have hitherto suffered so little molestation. I am apprehensive you will experience more in future; nor should I be surprised if the enemy were to establish a post in Virginia till the season for opening the campaign here." Cold comfort, but there was still colder to come; for the Commander-in-Chief proceeds to tell the Governor of Virginia that the true strategy consists in ignoring raids and in continuing to concentrate on the main task of driving back the enemy in Carolina. There is no mistaking the instructions:—

"But as the evils you have to apprehend from these predatory incursions are not to be compared to the injury of the common cause, and with the danger to your State in particular, from the conquest of the States to the southward of you, I am persuaded the attention to your immediate safety will not divert you from the measures intended to reinforce the Southern army and put it in a condition to stop the progress of the enemy in that quarter. The late accession of force makes them very formidable in Carolina, too powerful to be resisted without powerful succors from Virginia; and it is certainly her policy, as well as the interest of America, to keep the weight of the war at a distance from her. There is no doubt that a principal object of Arnold's operations is to make a diversion in favour of Cornwallis, and to remove this motive by disappointing the intention will be one of the surest ways of removing the enemy."

A few days later he instructed Baron Steuben, his commanding officer in Virginia, to do everything in his power

<sup>1</sup> A curious underestimate.

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“to make the defence of the State as little as possible interfere with an object of so much more importance as the danger is so much the greater. From the picture General Greene gives of his situation everything is to be apprehended if he is not powerfully supported from Virginia.” Whether Washington’s strategy was right, and whether he pursued his policy of leaving Virginia at the mercy of British raids too long, is open to discussion; but that it was Washington’s policy which Jefferson and Steuben so loyally pursued in these critical, and for Virginia tragic, months is indubitable. Washington of course could not have foreseen that Greene would have allowed Cornwallis to ‘remove’ by another route to Virginia. It may be argued that if Washington had not clung to the idea of ending the war by the capture of New York, he might have sent a couple of thousand regulars southwards to protect Virginia and to ensure victory in the Carolinas. Camden for instance might have been a decisive victory instead of a disastrous defeat, if the number of De Kalb’s regulars had been doubled; or again, Greene might easily have been made strong enough to shatter Cornwallis’s army at the Battle of Guildford Court House, where even a few hundred more continental troops would almost certainly have turned the scale. And lastly, if Greene had pursued Cornwallis (who had only some 1,400 effectives) after the Battle of Guildford, the great invasion (which almost overwhelmed Virginia in May, 1781) could hardly have come so near success.

For some time after the Arnold raid, the Virginian militia were just strong enough to contain the small British force which remained at Portsmouth. But such was the fear of British bayonets that we hear of militiamen shirking duty on a report that it was “intended to storm the

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enemy's works at Portsmouth." Jefferson's letters in January and February show us that he never flinched or flagged. His endeavour, he writes on January 16, "will be as far as possible to prevent Arnold's invasion diverting supplies from Greene's army in the South." On February 2 he informs Governor Nash of North Carolina that they are completing the equipment of their remaining four or five hundred regulars to send them on to General Greene, "being determined to permit the body of plunderers in our state to divert as little as possible of our effectual aid to the southern quarter." His policy was to keep the militia for the defence of Virginia, and forward the regulars to Greene. But on February 15, a letter from Greene convinced him that militia must be sent as well; and on the 18th, hearing of Cornwallis's pursuit of the American army, he tells Steuben that he has ordered every man in five adjoining counties "who has a fire-lock, or for whom one can be procured, to be embodied and marched immediately to join General Greene." All this time he was pressing hard for reinforcements and munitions, writing urgent letters to the Virginia delegates in Congress, to the President of that body, and to the Commander-in-Chief. Twice in February he begged Washington for arms and regulars. "The fatal want of arms," he said, "puts it out of our power to bring a greater force into the field than will barely suffice to restrain the adventures of the pitiful body of men they have at Portsmouth. Should any more be added to them, this country will be perfectly open to them by land as well as water." This was plain speaking enough, and 'more' were soon to be 'added.' "I have been knocking at the door of Congress," — so he wrote five days later, — "for aids of all kinds, but especially of arms ever since the middle of summer. . . .

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Justice indeed requires that we should be aided powerfully. Yet if they would repay us the arms we have lent them, we should give the enemy trouble though abandoned to ourselves."

By this time the British authorities had come to regard Virginia under Jefferson as the main support of the American cause. At any rate Cornwallis wrote to Clinton on April 10: "I cannot help expressing my wishes that the Chesapeake may become the seat of the war, even if necessary at the expense of abandoning New York. Until Virginia is in a manner subdued, our hold upon the Carolinas must be difficult if not precarious." Only two months before, in planning the campaign of the year, Washington held that the capture of New York "ought to be preferred to every other object." But by April 4 (rather late) he had come to the conclusion that it was his duty to support the Southern states powerfully from the north, "or they will be lost." This was after the failure of a demonstration by the French fleet against Portsmouth. Washington's change of policy was no doubt partly due to Jefferson's letters. When he decided to detach Lafayette with a small force to the South he asked him (April 6) to get into touch with Governor Jefferson at Richmond, being then under the impression that it would be necessary to co-operate with General Greene for the defence of Virginia against Phillips, Arnold, and Cornwallis.

The Virginia General Assembly, convened at Richmond on March 1,<sup>1</sup> had to deal with recruiting, impressment, and finance. Girardin tells us that apart from impressment the only resource was paper money. So the treasurer

<sup>1</sup> It met again at Richmond on May 7 and adjourned hastily to Charlottesville for the 24th.

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was authorised to print twenty million pounds, and five millions in bills, to be redeemed in 1792 by an assessment on property. At the time of these enactments the depreciation stood at 90 paper dollars to one silver dollar. The effect of the new issue was such that the rate soon reached 1,000 to 1, and after that the paper money of Virginia "became extinct." On March 21 Clinton detached 2,000 men under General Phillips for a new invasion of Virginia. Hearing of this on March 31, Jefferson at once wrote to the President of Congress, full of apprehension that Lafayette might, after all, not be despatched to their aid. He summed up the situation in a sentence: "an enemy three thousand strong, not a regular in the state, nor arms to put in the hands of the militia." Experience, we must remember, had proved that militiamen could not stand up against British regulars and bayonet charges. Experience was again justified. Phillips started up the James river, with 2,500 men, drove the militia out of Williamsburg, and a few days later drove Steuben out of Petersburg. Then with Arnold he proceeded up the river against Richmond. But Lafayette, who is the real military hero of this last Virginian stage of the war, hurrying forward from Baltimore by forced marches to Richmond, had occupied the capital with 900 men on April 29, the day before Phillips arrived at Manchester on the other side of the river. Richmond was saved for the time; the British force retired and dropped down the river. Meanwhile Cornwallis, leaving Greene to reconquer the Carolinas, was marching unopposed into Virginia by the coast. Arriving at Petersburg on May 20, he found Arnold in command of the British forces, Phillips having died of fever two days before. The British Army was now in overwhelming force under a brilliant commander. Halt-

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ing only three days at Petersburg, Cornwallis crossed the James at Westover. There he met reinforcements from New York under General Leslie, but sent some of them back to Portsmouth with Arnold, who soon afterwards returned to New York.

Cornwallis now confidently anticipated a great triumph. Lafayette with his little force lay at Wilton. "The boy cannot escape me," wrote Cornwallis home; and set off in hot pursuit with Tarleton's dragoons. But Lafayette was not to be caught. He moved north-west towards Fredericksburg, aided by a fine mounted corps of Virginian gentry under Colonel Mercer, who did good scouting service during this retreat. Skilfully eluding pursuit, Lafayette effected a junction with General Wayne at the fords of the Rapidan. Cornwallis halted on the North Anna in Hanover county. But before turning back he had despatched Simcoe southwards to destroy arms and stores, and Tarleton westwards to raid Charlottesville and Monticello. Steuben with 500 men was guarding the stores at the Point of Forks where the Rivanna meets the James river. He had removed his stores to the mouth of the James, when Simcoe with his troop of dragoons arrived on the opposite bank. The river was unfordable and the Americans were perfectly secure. But the English lit fires in all directions at night, and by this venerable ruse the old Prussian veteran, who had learned the art of war under Frederick the Great, was persuaded that the whole British Army had arrived. That night, in all haste, Steuben decamped, leaving most of the stores to be destroyed next morning by Simcoe. Nor did the general discover his mistake or halt in this rather ignominious flight until he and his men were thirty miles on the road to North Carolina.



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Tarleton with the other detachment of dragoons rode swiftly towards Charlottesville with orders to seize the governor and legislators of Virginia. On June 3 he halted for three hours at Louisa Court House, captured and paroled a few notables, including General Nelson's brother, and burnt a train of wagons carrying clothing to Greene's army. But he just missed his prize. It happened that one Jouitte of Charlottesville was at the Cuckoo Tavern in Louisa, when Tarleton dashed into the village. Mounting a fleet horse, as Girardin tells us, Jouitte sped by a short cut to Monticello, and so made known the approach of the British some hours before their arrival. At Monticello several members of the Virginian Assembly, including the speakers of the two Houses, were stopping with Jefferson. Jouitte brought the news just before sunrise. Jefferson's guests breakfasted and rode down to Charlottesville, where the House, hastily assembled, was as hastily adjourned to meet on the 7th west of the Blue Ridge at Staunton. As they were dispersing, Tarleton rode into Charlottesville. One of their number, General Edward Stevens, "a proud and fiery son of the Old Dominion," so Sir George Trevelyan calls him, instead of drawing on the dragoons — as Jefferson's critics would have done — preferred to escape quietly in the guise of a farmer.

On his way to Charlottesville Tarleton had detached a party under Captain McLeod to Monticello to kidnap the Governor. In spite of Jouitte's ride they were within an ace of success. In that case Jefferson might as a captured rebel have paid an involuntary visit to England before the end of the war, instead of visiting it a little later in the character of a diplomat. After breakfasting with his guests he had despatched his wife and children in a carriage to Enniscorthy, the seat of his friend Coles, some

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fourteen miles distant. Then telescope in hand he walked up Carter's Mountain to a rock which afforded a good view of Charlottesville. Seeing nothing astir in the little town, he thought the alarm must have been premature and was starting back to Monticello when he found that in kneeling down to level the telescope he had dropped his sword. On returning to pick it up he took another look through his glass and saw Charlottesville swarming with Tarleton's dragoons. Jefferson then jumped on his horse and followed his family to Enniscorthy. McLeod's men came up the hill from the other side five minutes afterwards.

Two faithful slaves, Martin and Cæsar, were depositing plate and valuables under the planked floor of the front portico. Martin was above, Cæsar in the dark hole below. Seeing the troopers Martin dropped the plank and left Cæsar below, where he remained undiscovered and without food for the next eighteen hours. Martin, as master of ceremonies, received the unwelcome visitors and showed the Captain through the house, just as a medieval seneschal might have led some robber chieftain over a surrendered castle. When they came to the study, McLeod looked round for a few minutes, then locked the door and gave the key to Martin. The soldiers took some wine from the cellar, but otherwise nothing was touched or injured. Tarleton, it seems, had left strict orders to that effect. This story of the British soldiers' visit to Monticello was the delight of Jefferson's children and grandchildren, who often heard it from him and from Cæsar. Martin died soon afterwards; but Cæsar, a great favourite, lived to a good old age, and the tale, we may be sure, lost nothing in the telling.

After an eighteen-hour stay in Monticello McLeod

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rejoined Tarleton, and they returned to the main army under Cornwallis which was encamped at the Point of Forks. Jefferson's property, Elk Hill, opposite Elk Island in the James, lay near by, and the British general occupied his house. Jefferson afterwards described the treatment meted out to him there. Cornwallis was a dashing soldier; but alike in the Carolinas and Virginia he pilfered and plundered like a leader of banditti. Jefferson's account is preserved in a letter to Dr. Gordon, dated Paris, July 16, 1788. Gordon had asked him for details of his sufferings at the hands of Colonel Tarleton. Jefferson answers: "I did not suffer by him. On the contrary he behaved very genteelly with me." But Cornwallis, he adds, who made Elk Hill his headquarters for ten days, destroyed all the growing crops of corn and tobacco, killed or carried off all the live stock, and removed thirty slaves, of whom twenty-seven died of fever in the British camp. He also burnt all Jefferson's barns and fences.

The Governor of Virginia was appointed for one year, and was eligible for re-election for a period not exceeding three years. Jefferson's second year of office had now ended, and he was determined to resign. There was a party in the Virginia Assembly which wanted to appoint a dictator. This Jefferson would not suffer. Rather than that he might have yielded to the pressure of his partisans and stood for re-election. But feeling that a military governor might help to re-assure the people, he persuaded his friends in the Legislature to support and secure the election of General Nelson, who commanded the militia. As it happened the crisis had passed. The worst moment of the whole war for Virginia was over. The tide of invasion was just beginning to recede. Cornwallis had shot his bolt, and Lafayette was soon able to pursue, though



MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE



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cautiously, the retreat of a still formidable, but no longer irresistible adversary.

The letter in which (on May 28) Governor Jefferson announced his retirement to General Washington describes the overwhelming strength of the invading force and its ability to lay waste Virginia. He appeals to Washington to come in person and use the talents, so long employed in establishing the freedom of kindred states, to save his native Virginia. To his own prayer he added those of many members of the Legislature. "The presence of their beloved countryman" would restore hope and confidence. Washington replied from New Windsor on June 8. "The progress which the enemy are making in Virginia," he begins, "is very alarming, not only to the State which is to be invaded but to all the rest." Nevertheless "were it prudent to commit a detail of our plan and expectations to paper, I could convince you by a variety of reasons that my presence is essential to the operations which have lately been concerted between the French commanders and myself."

He was still hoping to expel Clinton from New York, or at least to make him recall part of his forces from the south; "and should we, by a lucky coincidence of circumstances, gain a naval superiority, their ruin would be inevitable." Without the command of the water it would be almost impossible to transport his artillery, baggage, and stores to Virginia; and even if it could be done, "we should lose at least one third of our force by desertion, sickness, and the heat of the approaching season." If indeed the enemy should evacuate New York and transfer the whole war to the southward, Washington would in such case "follow them at every expense and under every difficulty and loss." But so long as the Allies were inferior

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at sea and Clinton remained in New York, he would not abandon his long-cherished plan of capturing that city. The tribute to Jefferson with which this letter closes may justly follow:—

“Allow me, before I take leave of Your Excellency in your public capacity, to express the obligations I am under for the readiness and zeal with which you have always forwarded and supported every measure which I have had occasion to recommend to you, and to assure you that I shall esteem myself honoured by a continuation of your friendship and correspondence, should your country permit you to remain in a private walk of life.”

Washington meant what he said. He had every reason to be grateful to Jefferson; and when he became President it was to Jefferson he turned to fill the first office in his Cabinet.

Jefferson's term of office expired on June 2, 1781, two days before McLeod visited Monticello. He retired, as Randall tells us, with the respect, good will, and approbation not only of Washington, but of every Continental commander in the South, including Greene, Lafayette, and Steuben. The last named, a martinet who had learned soldiering under Frederick the Great, was constantly at loggerheads with the civil functionaries in Virginia. He stormed, it is said, in good German and bad English against most of the magistrates and county authorities; but for Jefferson he could hardly have remained there as Greene's drill master and recruiting sergeant.

Nelson, “the very man whom the crisis needed,”<sup>1</sup> had all the luck on his side. Within a few weeks Cornwallis was on the defence. Admiral de Grasse arrived, followed by Washington; and in four months came the capitulation of Yorktown. Nelson was an honest, stout-hearted

<sup>1</sup> To quote Sir George Trevelyan.

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patriot, as zealous as Jefferson for his country's cause, and a soldier to boot. The Assembly at Staunton invested him with extraordinary powers; but he exceeded them. His proceedings were questioned and had to be legalised after the surrender of Cornwallis. Before the end of the year he resigned the governorship in disgust, and never re-appeared in public life.

Dr. Eckenrode, after laboriously showing that the enemy were successful until June and unsuccessful afterwards, that under Jefferson Richmond was captured and that under Nelson Yorktown capitulated, is sadly puzzled and disheartened by the fact that Nelson's "success" was followed by political eclipse, whereas Jefferson after his failure received every honour that the new Republic could offer and became the idol of American democracy. "Strange," cries Dr. Eckenrode. But stranger still is his explanation. He takes refuge in German philosophy. It was the "zeitgeist" that saved our incompetent Jefferson from the disastrous consequences of his incompetence. The bare possibility that Jefferson was a highly competent administrator and that the disasters suffered by Virginia were not due to him; or that Washington, Kosciusco, Lafayette,<sup>1</sup> and the other soldiers who knew him as Governor may have more justly estimated Jefferson's services, wisdom, and energy than Dr. Eckenrode, has not occurred to that worthy gentleman.

Be this as it may, there was, as might have been expected, a desire among some members of the Assembly, when it met at Staunton on June 7, smarting under losses and humiliations, to make a scapegoat of the Governor. Some, who were inclined to despair of the Republic,

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson was the most trusted friend in all America of Kosciusco and Lafayette.



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talked of electing Patrick Henry, Washington, or Greene "Dictator." In his *Notes on Virginia* Jefferson says that this scheme wanted a few votes only of being passed. In order, it seems, to promote a dictatorship, charges were thrown out against Jefferson's conduct as governor, and an enquiry was demanded by George Nicholas, a delegate from Albemarle, whom Randall describes as "a very honest, but at that time a very young and impulsive man." Rather to the surprise and chagrin of the dictatorship group, Jefferson's friends promptly agreed to the proposal of Nicholas, and on June 12 a Resolution was passed "that at the next session of Assembly an inquiry be made into the conduct of the executive of this State for the last twelve months." Thereupon, finding themselves in a minority, the partisans of a dictatorship adopted Jefferson's alternative — the election of a military man combining civil and military functions.

In the autumn before the Legislature met George Nicholas's colleague in the representation of Albemarle county resigned his seat "to place Mr. Jefferson on an equal ground for meeting the inquiry." Jefferson accepted, as he wrote to Edmund Randolph on September 16, "with the single object of answering the charges," which being accomplished he would at once withdraw. Meanwhile he had asked and obtained a list of the complaints against his administration; and to prevent any delay he sent Nicholas the heads of what he would prove in his own justification. The complaints consisted of nine objections and two queries. The objections and answers have been given in full in Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, Chapter 9. They all deal with the January invasions under Arnold, starting with General Washington's circular letter. They touch a number of technical points concerning militia, and

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the dates at which the militia were called out, post riders, signals, look outs, heavy artillery, and the garrisoning of Portsmouth, Suffolk, and other places. There is nothing personal; they are all directed against the action of the executive, and there is no hint that Jefferson was not acting throughout in harmonious co-operation with Steuben, Nelson, and his executive, or that the war preparations previous to the Arnold raid made by him and them were not in accordance with the policy of Washington and with the wishes, resolutions, and war laws passed by the Virginia Assembly. The ridiculous aspersions cast by pamphleteers, petty historians, and atrabilious critics on Jefferson's personal courage, because he did not wait at Monticello for Tarleton and die sword in hand on his front door steps, are of later manufacture. Indeed, on all occasions of a similar kind the members of the Assembly had themselves dispersed with prudent rapidity. Yet from innumerable publications started in the Federalist campaigns against Jefferson (and embodied in some subsequent biographies and histories) many, who cannot be expected to consult the original authorities or to trace the truth to its source, have been led to suppose that this so-called impeachment of Jefferson was a personal attack upon his courage during Cornwallis's invasion. The hearing of the inquiry took place on December 19. Jefferson rose and expressed his readiness to answer any charges that might be made. No one responded. Jefferson then read the objections and queries he had received from Nicholas with his own written answers. No discussion followed. Thereupon a motion was passed unanimously by the House of Delegates expressing public gratitude to Thomas Jefferson for his administration. On December 19 both Houses resolved unanimously, "That the sincere

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thanks of the General Assembly be given to our former Governor, Thomas Jefferson, Esquire, for his impartial, upright, and attentive administration whilst in office."

Jefferson's feelings were deeply wounded. It was bad enough that his beloved Virginia should have suffered all these humiliating disasters and devastations just before the final triumph of American Independence; that these miseries should have coincided with his Governorship was a bitter thought; and worst of all was the reflection that some of his countrymen had attributed their misfortunes to his negligence or incompetence. But mortified as he was by the necessity of meeting these unfounded charges, he harboured no personal resentment against the young member for his own county, George Nicholas, who had preferred them. Convinced by further enquiries, and by Jefferson's unanswerable answers, that he had acted wrongly and hastily, Nicholas did not appear in person to deliver his complaints, but published a frank retraction, and afterwards with his two brothers Wilson and Philip Nicholas was counted in the circle of Jefferson's devoted friends and supporters. This is worth mentioning perhaps, because in the opinion of Mr. Oliver, the author of a recent life of Hamilton, Jefferson was "vindictive and at times ferocious" — in fact, Mr. Oliver calls him "Jefferson the unforgiving." It is comforting therefore to know that Jefferson not only forgave but became a close friend of a young neighbour, who had given him so much pain and whose action on this occasion if successful might have wrecked his public career.

More than forty years after Jefferson's acquittal, Henry Lee, son of "Legion Harry," was preparing a second edition of his father's *Memoirs*, and wrote to Jefferson on the subject. Jefferson's reply (May 15, 1826) goes over the

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ground with characteristic thoroughness, explaining the chronology of the invasion and the measures he had taken. "Were your father now living," he writes, "and proposing, as you are, to publish a second edition of his *Memoirs*, I am satisfied he would give a very different aspect to the pages of that work which respect Arnold's invasion and surprise of Richmond, in the winter of 1780-1. He was then I believe in South Carolina, too distant from the scene of those transactions to relate them on his own knowledge, or even to sift them from the chaff of the rumours then afloat, — rumours which vanished soon before the real truth, as vapours before the sun, obliterated by their notoriety from every candid mind, and by the voice of the many, who, as actors or spectators, knew what had truly passed." As for his administration during the war, he added: "Without military education myself, instead of jeopardizing the public safety by pretending to take its command, of which I knew nothing, I had committed it to persons of the art, men who knew how to make the best use of it, to Steuben, for instance, to Nelson and others possessing that military skill and experience of which I had none."

The really noble and splendid thing about Jefferson's defence of his conduct as governor — a defence completely successful before a jury of his own countrymen, in the place where the damage was done, and at a time when the wounds were still fresh — a defence which will always be completely successful before any impartial tribunal — is that he never sought to throw blame upon any one else, either on Washington, who had denuded Virginia of its forces and left it defenceless in order to feed the war to the north and to the south, or on Greene, who after sucking Virginia dry turned his back on the State in order to

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re-conquer the Carolinas, or on Steuben, Washington's deputy in Virginia, or on General Nelson to whom its militia had been entrusted. But in this last letter on the subject, penned less than two months before his death, Jefferson permits himself to ask a question which deserves repetition : —

“And is the surprise of an open and unarmed place, although called a city and even a capital, so unprecedented as to be a matter of indelible reproach? Which of our own capitals during the same war was not in possession of the same enemy, not merely by surprise and for a day only, but permanently? That of Georgia? Of South Carolina? North Carolina? Pennsylvania? New York? Connecticut? Rhode Island? Massachusetts? And if others were not, it was because the enemy saw no object in taking possession of them. Add to the list in the late war Washington, the metropolis of the Union, covered by a fort, with troops and a dense population. And what capital on the continent of Europe (St. Petersburg and its regions of ice excepted) did not Bonaparte take and hold at his pleasure? Is it then just that Richmond and its authorities alone should be placed under the reproach of history, because in a moment of peculiar denudation of resources, by the *coup de main* of an enemy led on by the hand of fortune directing the winds and weather to their wishes, it was surprized and held for twenty-four hours? Or strange that that enemy, with such advantages, should be enabled then to get off without risking the honours he had achieved by burnings and destructions of property peculiar to his principles of warfare? We at least may leave these glories to their own trumpet.”

In case Lee desired more minute details Jefferson asks him to turn to Girardin's *History of Virginia*. “That work was written at Milton, within two or three miles of Monticello; and at the request of the author I communicated to him every paper I possessed on the subject, of which he has made the use he thought proper for his work. I can assure you of the truth of every fact he has drawn from these papers, and of the genuineness of such as he has taken the trouble of copying.” Jefferson goes on to de-

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scribe the papers then at Monticello relating to the period, "stitched together in large masses and so tattered and tender as not to admit removal further than from their shelves to a reading table." He cordially invites Lee to visit Monticello and to stay long enough to examine the papers at his ease, along with many letters from Generals Gates, Greene, Stevens, and others engaged in the Southern and Northern Wars. "All should be laid open to you without reserve; for there is not a truth existing which I fear, or would wish unknown to the whole world."

So much for Jefferson's defence. The fourth volume of Burk's *History of Virginia*, which contains the continuation by Skelton Jones and Louis Hue Girardin, is before me as I write, thanks to the generosity of a Virginian friend, Mr. Stewart Bryan of Richmond, who has most kindly lent me this treasure from his valuable Library. It is not possessed by the British Museum. Most of the copies were lost in a storm at sea. The pages particularly referred to by Jefferson are 453, 460, and Appendices XI-XV. Chap. XVIII, which covers the war in Virginia from Arnold's raid to Cornwallis's invasion, extends over thirty-seven closely printed pages, while the Appendices (including extracts from Jefferson's diary, and from the journals of the House of Representatives) are also far too voluminous to be analysed in this biography. But since Sir George Trevelyan, in his brilliant history of the American Revolution, has thought fit to censure Jefferson and to praise Nelson, relying, I suppose, upon Harry Lee's *Memoirs*, the following brief extract from Girardin, page 453, may be added:—

"On the 30th of December (1780) twenty-seven sail of vessels were seen entering the capes of Virginia. Of this circumstance the governor was informed on the 31st. . . . General Nelson was immediately dis-

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patched to the lower country — the militia, the public arms, and stores, were placed at his disposal — in short full powers were given him to adopt and execute such measures as exigencies might demand. In the preceding summer the patriotic and zealous Nelson had been requested by the Executive to call together the County Lieutenants of the lower parts of the State, and to concert with them the general measures to be taken for instant opposition on any invasion, until further resistance could be organized by the government. He had done so; and the most unbounded confidence was placed in his exertions.”

Sir George Trevelyan describes Jefferson as one who “could speak and write like few,” but “made a poor show in the character of a War Governor,” and on the very next page praises General Thomas Nelson as “the very man whom the crisis needed.” If the crisis needed Nelson, it had him, thanks to Jefferson; for Jefferson had selected Nelson to make the military preparations for defence long before Arnold’s Invasion; and as Jefferson had given Nelson full powers to resist Arnold as soon as his arrival was notified, it is hard to see why Jefferson should be blamed and Nelson lauded because Benedict Arnold went “unpunished and almost unresisted,” and afterwards “Lord Cornwallis marched inland with his main army and pushed his advanced parties into the heart of Virginia.”

It is unlucky that this injustice to Jefferson should disfigure even a page of the finest chapters in American history ever penned by a great English author. But Sir George Trevelyan’s admiration for Washington, Nelson, and Greene is in truth a sufficient exculpation of Jefferson, who most loyally executed Washington’s plans, appointed Nelson to command the militia, and saved Greene from Cornwallis.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Sir George Trevelyan’s “George III and Charles Fox,” Vol. II, Chap. XXIII, being the last volume of his *American Revolution*.

## CHAPTER III

### NOTES ON VIRGINIA. JEFFERSON WRITES A BOOK AND ESTABLISHES A CURRENCY

Blest with a taste exact yet unconfined,  
A knowledge both of books and human kind.

— POPE

THE two years following his governorship were the most unhappy in Jefferson's life; for he saw his wife becoming more and more of an invalid, until in September, 1782, as his Memoir tells, "I lost the cherished companion of my life in whose affections, unabated on both sides, I had lived the last ten years of my life in unchequered happiness." How tenderly he watched over and nursed her, we know from the family records and from a touching note left by Martha, the companion and witness of her father's grief.

Soon after his release from office, at the end of June, 1781, Jefferson had a bad fall from his horse, and was laid up for some weeks. His account book shows that he paid the doctor for two visits the sum of six hundred pounds — from which it may be presumed that the paper pound had sunk to a penny or less. In the same week three quarts of brandy are entered at seventy-one pounds two shillings. While thus kept indoors, Jefferson began to write his first and last book — a work which was to give him no little fame in Europe, and still claims pride of place in the library of every Virginian patriot.



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The Marquis de Marbois, of the French Legation in Philadelphia, seeking information about the different states of the American Union, had sent Jefferson a number of queries touching Virginia. Jefferson, who had always made a practice of jotting down any information he could obtain about Virginia, thought this a good opportunity of collecting his loose papers, and proceeded to arrange them in chapters corresponding with the Frenchman's questions. The task occupied much of his spare time in the last six months of 1781, and seems to have been completed in the following year. He thought of printing some copies for the use of his friends, but found on enquiry that the cost would be prohibitive. On arriving in Paris in 1784 he found that it could be printed at a quarter of the price asked in America, and accordingly two hundred copies were struck off, with the title *Notes on Virginia*. Internal evidence alone proves the date of composition. Many passages were obviously written before the end of the war. It is animated by the politics of the day, and abounds in characteristic judgments vigorously expressed not merely on Virginia questions but on all things human and divine which came into his mind as he wrote. This explains the interest it excited. Geographers, philologists, palæologists, lawyers, and politicians all found something to think about, or to talk about. No Frenchman knew France as Jefferson knew Virginia. On his own country — its commerce, laws, climate, scenery, plants, quadrupeds, bipeds, feathered and featherless — his authority was indisputable; and from this vantage ground he could cross swords successfully with Buffon, Raynal, and others whose fanciful speculations on America had passed for scientific certainties. To Jefferson's biographer it is an encyclopædia of the author's interests, studies, experiments, researches,

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and learning; an unfolding of his mind and character at their maturity. Passionate championship of what he believed to be right goes with accurate observation and zealous search after the truth. Here the man of science stands beside the historian, the sociologist, and the statesman. On one page he is rebutting Buffon; on another he is pleading for the slave; here is examining the theory of the deluge, there the principles of education. Elsewhere we find him arguing for perfect freedom of trade, and for abstention from the wars and armaments of Europe. Sometimes a Virginian, sometimes an American, always a citizen of the world, he glances with a reformer's vigilant eye at the abuses and oppressions of the old *régime*, or looks forward with the apostolic faith of a crusader to the new.

Beginning with the map of Virginia, our author describes its rivers and their commercial value. Geography and exploration always fascinated him. He read travellers' books in preference to novels, and found in them enough of fiction to exercise and amuse his critical faculties. A bold rider from his youth upwards Jefferson must have seen almost everything in his native state. His descriptions of the Mississippi and Missouri are drawn from Spanish sources, or from traders whom he had often entertained and interrogated. The Mississippi, he said, "will be one of the principal channels of future commerce for the country westward of the Alleghany." He likens its floods to those of the Nile. "This river," he adds, "yields turtle of a peculiar kind, perch, trout, gar, pike, mullets, herrings, carp, spatula-fish of fifty pounds weight, cat-fish of one hundred pounds weight, buffalo fish and sturgeon. Alligators or crocodiles have been seen as high up as the Acansas. It also abounds in herons, cranes, ducks, brant,

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geese, and swans." If his geographical and other speculations sometimes remind us of Herodotus, we must remember that a good half of the United States was still unexplored. Though six miles from its mouth the Missouri is only a quarter of a mile wide "yet the Spanish merchants at Pancore, or St. Louis, say they go two thousand miles up it." The Ohio, whose basin at that time constituted a quarter of the whole territory of the United States, "is the most beautiful river on earth," he cries in patriotic ecstasy.

In a succeeding chapter on the mountains of Virginia, he pictures "one of the most stupendous scenes in nature," the passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge:—

"You stand on a very high point of land. On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain an hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Potomac, in quest of a passage also. In the moment of their junction, they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea. The first glance of this scene hurries our senses into the opinion, that this earth has been created in time, that the mountains were formed first, that the rivers began to flow afterwards, that in this place, particularly, they have been dammed up by the Blue Ridge of mountains, and have formed an ocean which filled the whole valley, that continuing to rise they have at length broken over at this spot, and have torn the mountain down from its summit to its base. The piles of rock on each hand, but particularly on the Shenandoah, the evident marks of their disrapture and avulsion from their beds by the most powerful agents of nature, corroborate the impression. But the distant finishing which Nature gives to the picture, is of a very different character. It is a true contrast to the foreground. It is as placid and delightful as that is wild and tremendous. For the mountain being cloven asunder she presents to your eye, through the cleft, a small catch of smooth blue horizon, at an infinite distance in the plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass through the breach and participate of the calm below. Here the eye ultimately composes itself; and that way too the road happens actually to lead. You cross the Potomac above the junction, pass along its side through the base

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of the mountain for three miles, its terrible precipices hanging in fragments over you, and within twenty miles reach Fredericktown, and the fine country round that. This scene is worth a voyage across the Atlantic."

An account of caves and cascades brings us to the Natural Bridge "most sublime of Nature's works," a pardonable superlative before the discovery of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado River. Jefferson owned land by the Bridge and loved to show this eighth wonder of the world to his visitors. "Though its sides," he writes, "are provided in some parts with a parapet of fixed rocks, yet few men have resolution to walk to them, and look over into the abyss. You involuntarily fall on your hands and feet, creep to the parapet, and peep over it. Looking down from this height about a minute, gave me a violent headache." But from below the view was sublime: "so beautiful an arch, so elevated, so light, and springing as it were up to heaven."

A few years later in Paris (December 26, 1786) Jefferson still stoutly maintained the superiority of Virginian scenery to 'whatever I find on this side of the Atlantic,' adding: "I sometimes think of building a little hermitage at the Natural Bridge (for it is my property) and of passing there part of the year at least."

From Virginia's scenery Jefferson turns to geology and gives an account of its clay, its marble quarries, and its mines, chiefly lead, iron, and coal. In the Western country, he says, there is abundant coal, that of Pittsburg being "of very superior quality." Only one gold nugget, so far as he knew, had been found in the State, on the north side of the Rappahannock, and one emerald. But "amethysts have been frequent, and crystals common."

Immense bodies of Schist with impressions of shells near

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the eastern foot of the North Mountains recall statements that shells had been found on the Andes 15,000 feet above sea-level — which “is considered by many both of the learned and unlearned as a proof of an universal deluge.” To this view Jefferson offers various scientific objections; and after disposing of several false theories concludes: “we must be contented to acknowledge that this great phenomenon is as yet unsolved. Ignorance is preferable to error: and he is less remote from the truth who believes nothing than he who believes what is wrong.”

After discoursing on the hot springs our author passes to botany, and catalogues the trees and plants native to Virginia. Virginia was rich in vegetables and wild fruits. Among the former were Indian millet, oats, peas, hops, Jerusalem artichoke; among the latter plums, apples, mulberries, persimmon, cherry, sugar maple, various kinds of nuts and grapes, strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries. Hemp and flax were also natives; but tobacco, maize, potatoes, pumpkins, and squashes, though found in Virginia by the first English settlers, had probably, he thought, been brought from the South by the Indians. Jefferson relied much on “the *Flora Virginica* of our great botanist Dr. Clayton” published by Gronovius at Leyden in 1762. “This accurate observer,” he says, “was a native and resident of Virginia where he passed a long life in botanical exploration, and is supposed to have enlarged the botanical catalogue as much as almost any man who has lived.” His own botanical learning was not small. How widely he had read may be inferred from a note citing Diodorus Siculus and Acosta, the Spanish authority, on the question whether maize was known in Europe before the discovery of America.

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An elaborate account of Virginian quadrupeds and birds is enlivened by a curious controversy with Count de Buffon, the Abbé Raynal, and other French writers, who had advanced the following statements:

1. That the animals common both to the Old and New World are smaller in the latter.
2. That the animals peculiar to America are small.
3. That animals domesticated in both have degenerated in America.

Buffon and his disciples found support for these fancies (which they assumed to be facts) by manufacturing two hypotheses — one that heat is friendly, and moisture adverse, to the production of large quadrupeds; the other that America is less hot and more humid than the Old World. Thereupon, having marked out the ground taken by his adversaries, Jefferson proceeds to demolish them. No sufficient scientific observations existed to decide whether the climate of America was colder and more humid than that of Europe. To the supposition that moisture is unfriendly to animal growth Jefferson replies that moisture is favourable to vegetables and that vegetables are “mediately or immediately” the food of every animal. As for the effects of cold, Buffon himself had admitted that some of the coldest countries breed some of the largest quadrupeds.

Jefferson caps his argument with a comparative table showing the actual weights, “formulated by judicious persons,” of American and European quadrupeds. The heaviest American quadruped, the buffalo, weighed 1,800 pounds. Then came the round-horned elk, 450 pounds, and the American bear, 410 pounds. Europe had nothing better to offer than the red deer, 288 pounds, and the wild boar, 280 pounds.

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Buffon had confessed that the American beaver, otter, and shrewmouse were larger than the European, and Jefferson throws in the weasel. The bones of the American mammoth, he adds, are as big as those found in the Old World; and according to Indian tradition, the mammoth or great buffalo still existed in Northern and Western America. As those parts "remain in their aboriginal state, unexplored and undisturbed by us," the mammoth "may still exist there now, as he did formerly where we find his bones."

In a letter to Chastellux (June 7, 1785), Jefferson remarked further: "As to the degeneracy of the man of Europe transplanted to America, it is no part of De Buffon's system. He goes indeed with one step of it, but he stops there." It was Raynal who had applied Buffon's theory to the case of white men transplanted from Europe. "On doit être étonné," wrote that foolish savant, "que l'Amérique n'ait pas encore produit un bon poète, un habile mathématicien, un homme de génie dans un seul art, une seule science." As to poetry, retorted Jefferson, in his *Notes*, if this reproach were still true when the American people had existed as a people as long as the Greeks before they produced their Homer, or the Romans Virgil, or the French Racine and Voltaire, or the English Shakespeare and Milton, it would then be time enough to inquire why no American name had been inscribed on the roll of great poets. But in the arts and sciences of war and peace, America could already boast of a Washington, a Franklin, and a Rittenhouse. The first would triumph over time and be remembered by the votaries of liberty when that wretched philosophy was forgotten, which would have arraigned him among the degeneracies of nature. Than Franklin "no one of the present age has made more im-

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portant discoveries," while Rittenhouse had given proof of an extraordinary mechanical genius by his model of the planetary system. Considering also that France had twenty millions of inhabitants, and the British islands ten, against the three millions of the United States, America was contributing its full quota to the genius of the age.

In after years, when conversation turned on this theory of American degeneracy, Jefferson loved to retail one of Benjamin Franklin's stories. The Doctor had a party to dine with him one day at his house in Passy. Half were Americans, half French, and among them the Abbé de Raynal. During dinner the Abbé embarked on his favourite theory of the degeneracy of animals and even of man in America; and enlarged on it with his usual eloquence. Dr. Franklin, noticing the accidental stature of his guests, and their position at the table, said: "Come, M. L'Abbé, let us try this question by the fact before us. We are here one half Americans and one half French, and it happens that the Americans have placed themselves on one side of the table, and our French friends on the other. Let both parties rise, and we will see on which side nature has degenerated." It happened that his American guests, like Franklin, were all big men, and the French all diminutive, the Abbé himself a mere shrimp.

Whether in consequence of Franklin's dinner, or of Jefferson's *Notes*, the Abbé had the grace to withdraw the offending passage from later editions of his book.

Though Jefferson had a poor opinion of Raynal, he admired Buffon; and so, after demolishing the theory of American degeneracy, he paid a handsome tribute to the "celebrated zoologist who has added, and is still adding, so many precious things to the treasures of science."



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Jefferson, as we have seen, was from his boyhood deeply interested in the Red Indians. Were they really aborigines? On this problem he offers a conjecture which is now adopted by many anthropologists:—

“The late discoveries of Captain Cook, coasting from Kamschatka to California, have proved that if the two continents of Asia and America be separated at all, it is only by a narrow strait. So that from this side also, inhabitants may have passed into America; and the resemblance between the Indians of America and the eastern inhabitants of Asia, would induce us to conjecture, that the former are the descendants of the latter, or the latter of the former.”

A comparison of languages might settle the question, and he laments that so many of the Indian tribes had been extinguished before their languages could be collected and placed on record. But he evidently thought that the Red Men of Asia and America came from a common stock.

From a critical sketch of the constitution and constitutional history of Virginia (in answer to Query XIII) one or two characteristic sentences may be taken. Speaking of Senates and Second Chambers he remarks: “In Great Britain it is said their constitution relies on the House of Commons for honesty and the Lords for wisdom; which would be a rational reliance if honesty were to be bought with money and if wisdom were hereditary.” He is against concentrating all authority, including executive and judicial, in the legislative body. “An elective despotism was not the government we fought for.” The powers even of an elected assembly should be limited; for some day the corruption, which already prevailed in England, would probably invade the American government and spread through the body of the people. Human nature was the same on both sides of the Atlantic. Here

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Jefferson paused to demolish the magic of the word "constitution." If a constitutional convention, instead of saying, "We the legislature establish a constitution," were to say, "We the legislature establish an act which the legislature cannot alter," the fallacy would expose itself.

Passing from Constitutional problems to the Slavery Question, Jefferson, after reciting his own scheme of emancipation and emigration, proceeds:—

"It will probably be asked, why not retain and incorporate the blacks into the State, and thus save the expense of supplying by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave? Deep-rooted prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections by the blacks of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinction which nature has made; and many other circumstances will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions, which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race."

To these political objections he added physical and moral arguments against maintaining a mixed population of blacks and whites.

His opinion of negro character and characteristics is not unfavourable. He thought them at least as brave as white men, and more adventuresome—perhaps from want of foresight, which prevents their seeing a danger till it is present. In love they were more ardent, but less delicate and sentimental:—

"Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them. In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labor. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep."

Comparing the two races in respect of memory, reason, and imagination, Jefferson holds that in memory the

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blacks are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior. One could scarcely be found capable of comprehending Euclid. In imagination he found them dull and tasteless. It was true that the black race had laboured under many drawbacks in Africa and America. But in America many had been trained in handicrafts and some had enjoyed a liberal education : —

“The Indians, with no advantages of this kind, will often carve figures on their pipes not destitute of design or merit. They will crayon out an animal, a plant, or a country, so as to prove the existence of a germ in their minds which only wants cultivation. They astonish you with strokes of the most sublime oratory; such as prove their reason and sentiment strong, their imagination glowing and elevated. But never yet could I find that a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration; never saw even an elementary trait of painting or sculpture. In music they are more generally gifted than the whites, with accurate ears for tune and time; and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch. Whether they will be equal to the composition of a more extensive run of melody, or of complicated harmony is yet to be proved. Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the blacks is misery enough, God knows, but no poetry.”

As for negro writers like Phyllis Whately or Ignatius Sancho, the best of their race, they must be enrolled at the bottom of the column in competition with white authors. That the inferiority of the blacks did not proceed from slavery alone was made probable by the experience of the Romans. Jefferson quotes Plutarch, Cato, and Suetonius to prove that Roman slaves were worse treated than Virginian. In spite of that some of the finest artists and philosophers of Rome were slaves. “Epictetus, Terence, and Phædrus were slaves. But they were of the race of whites. It is not their condition then but nature which has produced the distinction.” Nevertheless

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"Jove fixed it certain that whatever day  
Makes man a slave takes half his worth away."<sup>1</sup>

The disposition of black slaves to petty theft must be attributed to their situation, not to natural depravity. "The man in whose favour no laws of property exist probably feels himself less bound to respect those made in favour of others." Laws to be just must be reciprocal, "and it is a problem which I give to the master to solve whether the religious precepts against the violation of property were not framed for him as well as the slave." Even so, Jefferson had found among slaves "numerous instances of the most rigid integrity, and as many as among their better instructed masters of benevolence, gratitude, and unshaken fidelity."

To sum up — and here we have perhaps the best expression of Jefferson's views on negro slaves and slavery : —

"The opinion that they are inferior in the faculties of reason and imagination, must be hazarded with great diffidence. To justify a general conclusion, requires many observations, even where the subject may be submitted to the anatomical knife, to optical glasses, to analysis by fire or by solvents. How much more then where it is a faculty, not a substance, we are examining; where it eludes the research of all the senses; where the conditions of its existence are various and variously combined; where the effects of those which are present or absent bid defiance to calculation; let me add too, as a circumstance of great tenderness, where our conclusion would degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them.

To our reproach it must be said that, though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it, therefore, as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind. It is not

<sup>1</sup> Homer: *Odyssey* XVII, 323.

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against experience to suppose that different species of the same genus, or varieties of the same species, may possess different qualifications. Will not a lover of natural history then, one who views the gradations in all the race of animals with the eye of philosophy, excuse an effort to keep those in the department of man as distinct as nature has formed them? This unfortunate difference of color, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people. Many of their advocates, while they wish to vindicate the liberty of human nature, are anxious to preserve its dignity and beauty. Some of these, embarrassed by the question, 'What further is to be done with them' join themselves in opposition with those who are actuated by sordid avarice only. Among the Romans emancipation required but one effort. The slave when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master. But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture."

It was not Jefferson's fault that the emancipation of slaves did not begin on the day when he entered the Assembly of Virginia. His protest against the slave trade was struck out of his draft of the Declaration of Independence. If his measures had not been rejected, his countrymen would have been saved, half a century after his death, from the cruelties and miseries of the Civil War.

Jefferson wished slavery abolished for the sake of the whites as well as the blacks.

"The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. This quality is the germ of all education in him. From his cradle to his grave he is learning to do what he sees others do. If a parent could find no motive either in his philanthropy or his self-love, for restraining the intemperance of his passion towards his slave, it should always be a sufficient one that his child is present. But generally it is not sufficient. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose to the worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in

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tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances.”

Slavery was injurious to the industry as well as to the morals of the white man. “For in a warm climate no man will labour for himself who can make another labour for him.” Nor could American liberties be secure so long as negro slavery was maintained. “Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever.”

Jefferson was hopeful that the arguments and considerations which had convinced him and many of his friends were gaining ground:—

“I think a change already perceptible, since the origin of the present revolution. The spirit of the master is abating, that of the slave rising from the dust, his condition mollifying, the way I hope preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for a total emancipation, and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation.”

If slavery was in Jefferson's eyes the chief blot on Virginia and on the American people, another danger was that American statesmen, misled by the political economists of Europe (who had held that every state should manufacture for itself), might induce the people to congregate in great cities by following the European example of protecting and encouraging manufactures at the expense of agriculture. Jefferson hated “the mobs of great cities.” During the war, the colonists, cut off from European commerce, had been manufacturing in their homes the most necessary articles of clothing. “Those of cotton will bear some comparison with the same kinds of manufacture in Europe”; but those of wool, flax, and hemp were very coarse and unsightly. As farming was a healthier and

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happier occupation, and as the husbandman was a better citizen than the slum dweller, Jefferson hoped that with peace his countrymen would resume the exchange of their agricultural products for the manufactures of Europe.

In the *Notes on Virginia* we find not only a sketch of his Bills for educating the people, but an exposition of his theory that popular government cannot be either safe or efficient unless the people are educated. He held that a self-governing democracy must be an educated democracy, and that liberty as well as justice demands equality of opportunity and public encouragement of talent. "We hope to avail the State of those talents which nature has sown as liberally among the poor as the rich, but which perish without use, if not sought for and cultivated."

In associating manhood suffrage with popular education Jefferson was in the vanguard of philosophic radicalism: —

"Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories. And to render them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree. This indeed is not all that is necessary, though it be essentially necessary. An amendment to our constitution must here come in aid of the public education. The influence over government must be shared among all the people. If every individual which composes their mass participates of the ultimate authority, the government will be safe; because the corrupting the whole mass will exceed any private resources of wealth; and public ones cannot be provided but by levies on the people. In this case every man would have to pay his own price. The government of Great Britain has been corrupted, because but one man in ten has a right to vote for members of parliament. The sellers of the government, therefore, get nine-tenths of their price clear. It has been thought that corruption is restrained by confining the right of suffrage to a few of the wealthier of the people; but it would be more effectually restrained by an extension of that right to such numbers as would bid defiance to the means of corruption."

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Jefferson did not forget the Red Indians in his educational philanthropy. He suggested that the State should appoint a Missionary to the Indians, who could not only diffuse Christianity but would also collect their traditions, laws, customs, and languages.

On social and economic conditions in Virginia at the close of the war we find some interesting paragraphs. There is a brief history of the coins current before the flood of paper money. Since then creditors had suffered great injustices and legal tender had lost value so rapidly that it had become useless even for statistical purposes. "We find ourselves cheated in every essay by the depreciation intervening between the declaration of the tax and its actual receipt." Calculating in hard cash, Jefferson made the cost of Government in Virginia work out at about two-fifths of a dollar, or twenty-one pence per head, one-sixteenth of the cost of Government at that time to an inhabitant of Great Britain. A million dollars in addition might, he thought, be paid annually by Virginia without distress, if need be, to support the Federal army and government.

Towards the end of his book Jefferson was led to consider what should be the course of American policy when the revolted colonies had become an independent nation. In the first place it should be peaceful. War was "devoutly to be deprecated," and like Cobden he wanted a real peace — a peace of free intercourse and free commerce with all the nations of the world: —

"Young as we are, and with such a country before us to fill with people and with happiness, we should point in that direction the whole generative force of nature, wasting none of it in efforts of mutual destruction. It should be our endeavour to cultivate the peace and friendship of every nation, even of that which has injured us the most, when



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we shall have carried our point against her. Our interest will be to throw open the doors of commerce, and to knock off all its shackles, giving perfect freedom to all persons for the vent of whatever they may choose to bring into our ports, and asking the same in theirs. Never was so much false arithmetic employed on any subject, as that which has been employed to persuade nations that it is their interest to go to war. Were the money which it has cost to gain, at the close of a long war, a little town, or a little territory, the right to cut wood here, or to catch fish there, expended in improving what they already possess, in making roads, opening rivers, building ports, improving the arts, and finding employment for their idle poor, it would render them much stronger, much wealthier and happier. This I hope will be our wisdom."

If he could have his way there would be no war. But the shipping interests might force them one day again to engage. He could not therefore count on the avoidance of all wars. Wise statesmen would avoid that half of them which would be produced by our own follies and our own acts of injustice; and make for the other half the best preparations we can:—

"Of what nature should these be? A land army would be useless for offence, and not the best nor the safest instrument of defence. For either of these purposes, the sea is the field on which we should meet an European enemy. On that element it is necessary we should possess some power. To aim at such a navy as the greater nations of Europe possess would be a foolish and wicked waste of the energies of our countrymen. It would be to pull on our own heads that load of military expense which makes the European labourer go supperless to bed, and moistens his bread with the sweat of his brows. It will be enough if we enable ourselves to prevent insults on the sea, because circumstances exist, which render even the stronger ones weak as to us. Providence has placed their richest and most defenceless possessions at our door; has obliged their most precious commerce to pass, as it were, in review before us. To protect this, or to assail, a small part only of their naval force will ever be risked across the Atlantic. . . . A small naval force then is sufficient for us, and a small one is necessary."

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After composing this remarkable treatise Jefferson was plunged in grief by his wife's death on September 6, 1782<sup>1</sup>; and this disposed him again to welcome an opportunity for public service, which would take him away from scenes once so dear but now so painful. When he retired from the Governorship in June, 1781, he had declined an appointment pressed on him by Congress to serve as plenipotentiary at the peace congress. In the following December he refused to serve as a Virginian delegate to Congress. But after his wife's death in 1782, he accepted from Congress a mission to Europe to assist Franklin, Jay and Adams in negotiations for peace. But his ship was detained by ice at Baltimore; and on news arriving that peace preliminaries had been signed, the mission was suspended.

In May, 1783, he returned to Monticello, and was almost immediately elected with James Monroe and three others to Congress. This time he accepted the appointment, and took his seat on November 4, 1783. Philadelphia was in disorder. Congress, insulted by a mob of soldiers whose pay was in arrears, adjourned to Annapolis, and there Jefferson worked hard from December, 1783, to May, 1784. Everything was in chaos, and plenty of work was thrown on his shoulders. It fell to him as chairman of a currency committee to choose a standard coin for the American Union. The Financier Robert Morris and his assistant Gouverneur Morris, who were trying to restore order at the Treasury, had prepared a report suggesting an extension of the decimal system to all weights and measures, and a new currency whose unit should be a coin equiv-

<sup>1</sup> She was buried in the graveyard of Monticello. On her tombstone Jefferson inscribed the beautiful lines from Achilles' lament over the dead body of Patroclus in the 22nd Iliad, lines 389-390.

*ἐὶ δὲ θανόντων περ καταλήθοντ' εἰν' Ἀἰδᾶο  
ἀντάρ ἐγὼ καὶ κείθι φίλου μεμνήσομ' ἐτάριου.*

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alent to one fourteen hundred and fortieth of a dollar. This report was considered by Jefferson. He approved of the decimal system, but saw the practical absurdity of the proposed unit. He proposed instead that the Spanish dollar should be the unit, with decimal divisions and subdivisions — the smallest coin to be a copper cent, the hundredth part of a dollar. Jefferson's admirable paper did not convince the Morrisises, but the committee accepted his recommendations, and they were adopted in the following year. "The Almighty Dollar" is therefore Jefferson's creation. Consequently, his "Notes on the Establishment of a Money Unit, and of a Coinage for the United States," which prevailed over the Morris report, constitute an epoch in monetary history, ranking with Sir Isaac Newton's representation to the Lords of the Treasury in 1717 (to which Jefferson refers) or with the Bullion Report, which led to the resumption of cash payments in England a few years after Waterloo. Jefferson's easy mastery of a complex subject, his wisdom in adapting theory to the practical needs and habits of the people, and his skill in presenting the case to his fellow legislators must excite the admiration of experts and laymen alike.

"In fixing the Unit of Money," he begins, "these circumstances are of principal importance" : —

That it be of *convenient size* to be applied as a measure to the common money transactions of life.

That its parts and multiples be in an *easy proportion* to each other, so as to facilitate the money arithmetic.

That the Unit and its parts, or divisions, be *so nearly of the value of some of the known coins*, as that they may be of easy adoption for the people.

The Spanish Dollar seems to fulfil all these conditions.

I. Taking into our view all money transactions, great and small, I question if a common measure of more *convenient size* than the Dollar

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could be proposed. The value of 100, 1,000, 10,000 dollars is well estimated by the mind; so is that of the tenth or the hundredth of a dollar. Few transactions are above or below these limits. The expediency of attending to the size of the Money Unit will be evident to anyone who will consider how inconvenient it would be to a manufacturer or merchant, if, instead of the yard for measuring cloth, either the inch or the mile had been made the Unit of Measure.

II. The most *easy ratio* of multiplication and division, is that by ten. Everyone knows the facility of Decimal Arithmetic. Everyone remembers, that, when learning Money-Arithmetic, he used to be puzzled with adding the farthings, taking out the fours and carrying them on; adding the pence, taking out the twelves and carrying them on; adding the shillings, taking out the twenties and carrying them on; but when he came to the pounds, where he had only tens to carry forward, it was easy and free from error. The bulk of mankind are school-boys through life. These little perplexities are always great to them. And even mathematical heads feel the relief of an easier, substituted for a more difficult process. Foreigners, too, who trade or travel among us, will find a great facility in understanding our coins and accounts from this ratio of subdivision. Those who have had occasion to convert the Livres, sols, and deniers of the French; the Gilders, stivers, and frenings of the Dutch; the Pounds, shillings, and pence and farthings of these several States, into each other, can judge how much they would have been aided had their several subdivisions been in a decimal ratio. Certainly, in all cases, where we are free to choose between easy and difficult modes of operation, it is most rational to choose the easy.

The third condition required was that the money Unit, with its multiples and subdivisions, should coincide in value with some of the current coins "so nearly that the people may, by a quick reference in the mind, estimate their value. If this be not attended to, they will be very long in adopting the innovation, if ever they adopt it." The four coins proposed in his plan for an American currency are then put to this test of familiarity.

1. The golden ten dollar piece would be one-fifth more

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than a half joe,<sup>1</sup> and one-fifteenth more than a double guinea.

2. The silver dollar, or Unit of (about) 365 grains of silver, was a known coin, the most familiar of all. "It is already adopted from South to North; has identified our currency, and therefore happily offers itself as a Unit already introduced. Our public debt, our requisitions, and their apportionments, have given it actual and long possession of the place of Unit." As a Unit the pound was the dollar's only competitor, but the pound varied in value in different states. In Georgia it contained 1,547 grains of fine silver. In Virginia and New England 1,289 grains; in New York 966 $\frac{3}{4}$  grains, and so on; while the pound sterling then contained 1,718 $\frac{3}{4}$  grains of pure silver. Happily the dollar was familiar in all the States and was used to measure values no less than the provincial pounds.

3. Jefferson's third coin, the tenth of a dollar, was also familiar, being in fact the Spanish 'bit,' or half pistareen.

4. The hundredth or cent, a copper coin, would differ little in value from the penny of New York, Pennsylvania, and other states. In Virginia copper coins had never been used; but Jefferson favoured their introduction because, as he observed acutely, "small change is useful in a State and tends to reduce the price of small articles." It might be well also, he thought, to coin silver half dollars, a bit, and a half bit.

Coming to the interesting question of the ratio between gold and silver Jefferson noted that the Spanish ratio was then sixteen to one, the English ratio, fifteen and a half to one, and the French fifteen to one, the result being that there was more gold coin in Spain and England and less in France. Jefferson's view was, the

<sup>1</sup> Joe is short for 'Johannes,' a Portuguese and Brazilian gold coin.

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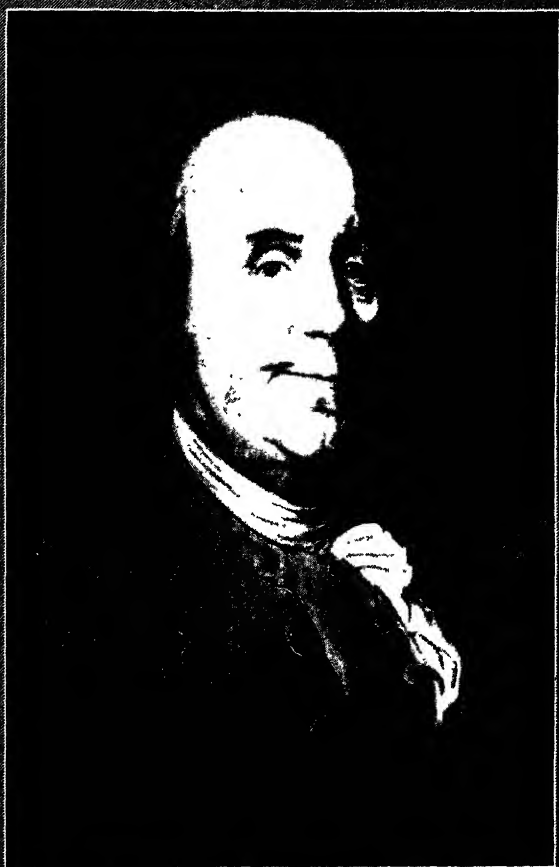
right one, that in fixing a bimetallic ratio they should take an average of the market price of gold in various countries, though "perhaps we might with safety lean to a proportion somewhat above par for gold." He inclined to favour fifteen to one. In deciding the quantum of alloy Jefferson selected the French ratio of one ounce to the pound for silver coin and the British ratio of one ounce to the pound for gold coin. Subject to an examination by experts of the various Spanish and Mexican dollars then in circulation he assumed that the dollar unit would be fixed at 365 grains of pure silver, that the ratio to gold would be fifteen to one, that the alloy in both gold and silver coins would be one-twelfth. On these assumptions he fixed the weight of all the gold and silver coins in his plan. Such are the main features of the scheme on which the American monetary system was founded by the scientific genius of Jefferson.

BOOK III  
AMERICAN MINISTER IN FRANCE  
CHAPTER I

DIPLOMAT AND TRAVELLER

“Surely travel filleth the man; he hath lived but locked up in a larger chest, which hath never seen but one land.” — FELTHAM

ON May 7, 1784, Congress decided to appoint a Minister Plenipotentiary to assist Benjamin Franklin and John Adams in negotiating Treaties of Commerce with foreign nations. The mission was offered to Jefferson. He accepted it, and on the 11th left Annapolis for Philadelphia, where his eldest daughter Martha was at school. The two younger ones he left in the care of their maternal aunt, Mrs. Eppes; Martha he took with him. Travelling by slow stages through New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island he informed himself of commercial conditions in those States, then passed through Massachusetts to New Hampshire and Vermont, and returning to Boston set sail for Europe on July 5 in the *Ceres*, a merchant ship bound to Cowes in the Isle of Wight, then a favourite English port. Their voyage, wrote Martha at a later date, was as pleasant as fine weather, a fine ship, good company, and an excellent table could make it. Colonel Tracy, the owner of the vessel, who was one of the six passengers, doubtless looked after their creature



*Painted by Duplessis*





## Diplomat and Traveller

comforts. From land to land they were only nineteen days, for three of which, becalmed on the banks of Newfoundland, they spent the time in codfishing. Towards the end Martha became very seasick, and Jefferson spent a week at Portsmouth to give his little travelling companion time to recover before they crossed to Paris. At Paris they stopped in the Hotel D'Orléans, in the Rue des Petits Augustins, until a house near the Boulevards was ready. At the end of the year 1784, Jefferson removed to an elegant house with a large garden and outbuildings, which stood at the corner of the Rue Neuve de Berry and the Grande Route des Champs Elysées. Here, till his return home in 1789, he lived with Humphreys, the Secretary of the Legation, and Short, his private secretary. He also had rooms in the Carthusian Monastery on Mount Calvary, a quiet hermitage, where silence was enjoined. "Whenever he had a press of business," so his daughter wrote, "he was in the habit of taking his papers and going to the hermitage, where he spent sometimes a week or more till he finished his work. . . . His habits of study in Paris were pretty much what they were elsewhere. He was always a very early riser, and the whole morning was spent in business." He generally wrote till one o'clock, with a respite for breakfast, "at which he frequently lingered, conversing willingly at such times." At one o'clock he rode or took a long walk into the country. On one of these rambles, while earnestly engaged in conversation with a friend, he stumbled and broke his wrist. It was a complicated fracture, and the wrist always remained weak and stiff. While thus disabled he learned to write with his left hand, but lost its use a few years before his death by another fall. Martha Jefferson says that she stayed with her father till he sent her to a convent in Paris, "where his

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visits to me were daily for the first month or two, till in fact, I recovered my spirits." Martha's convent school at l'Abbaye Royale de Penthemont is described by Randall as "the most fashionable and difficult of access in France." Jefferson mentions it in a letter to his sister, Mrs. Bolling, as the best house of education for girls in France, adding: "There are in it as many Protestants as Catholics, and not a word is ever spoken to them on the subject of religion." Jefferson acted the part of mother and father to his daughters. His letters to them and theirs to him are charming. Sometimes Martha, dutiful but sprightly, called for rebuke; as when she tried to get off reading Livy, whose "ancient Italian" she found very difficult. "Titus Livius," she wrote "puts me out of my wits." Her father told her to persevere and take courage. Here is an extract from Martha's answering letter (May 27, 1787):—

"I have learnt several new pieces on the harpsichord, drawn five landscapes and three flowers, and hope to have done something more by the time you come. I go on pretty well with my history, and as for *Tite Live*, I have begun it three or four times, and go on so slowly with it that I believe I never shall finish it. It was in vain that I took courage; it serves to little good in the execution of a thing almost impossible. I read a little of it with my master, who tells me almost all the words, and in fine it makes me lose my time."

Jefferson's reply was despatched three days later from Aix en Provence, where he was trying to cure his wrist:—

"I do not like your saying that you are unable to read the ancient print of your Livy but with the aid of your master. We are always equal to what we undertake with resolution. . . . It is part of the American character to consider nothing as desperate."

On another occasion Martha has a complaint against her father: "You wrote me a long letter as I asked you; however, it would have been much more so without so wide a margin!" When Martha overspends, Jefferson is

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as severe as a parent should be; but he sends the money. He taught her never to be idle: "No person," he wrote, "will have occasion to complain of the want of time who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing."

After arriving at Paris Jefferson called on old Benjamin Franklin at Passy, and they wrote to John Adams, who was at the Hague, to join them. The three then fixed the form of a Commercial Treaty drafted by Jefferson, which should be offered to such nations as were found ready to treat. But the industries of European nations were then so wrapped and strangled in regulations, restrictions, monopolies, prohibitions, tariffs, and octrois that proposals for liberating trade found little favour. In a conference with the Count de Vergennes, Louis' foreign minister, Jefferson tells us, it was found better to leave to negotiation on both sides "such modifications of our commercial intercourse as would voluntarily flow from amicable dispositions." The three American negotiators had one success. "Old Frederic of Prussia met us cordially," and without hesitation appointed Thulemeyer, his minister at the Hague, to negotiate. "We communicated to him our *projet*, which with little alteration by the King was soon concluded." This treaty with Frederic the Great contained a clause, which on Franklin's suggestion had been proposed by the American Commissioners to the British Government during the Peace negotiations. Its main object was to provide for the immunity of peaceful shipping and commerce in time of war. This clause (Article 23 of the treaty with Prussia), originated by Franklin and endorsed by Jefferson, is an important landmark in the history of man's vain struggle for peace and civilisation. It runs:—

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"If war should arise between the two contracting parties, the merchants of either country, then residing in the other, shall be allowed to remain nine months to collect their debts and settle their affairs, and may depart freely, carrying off all their effects without molestation or hindrance; and all women and children, scholars of every faculty, cultivators of the earth, artisans, manufacturers, and fishermen, unarmed and inhabiting unfortified towns, villages, or places, and in general all others, whose occupations are for the common subsistence and benefit of mankind, shall be allowed to continue their respective employments, and shall not be molested in their persons, nor shall their houses and goods be burnt, or otherwise destroyed, nor their fields wasted by the armed force of the enemy into whose power, by the events of war, they may happen to fall; but, if anything is necessary to be taken from them for the use of such armed force, the same shall be paid for at a reasonable price. And all merchants and trading vessels employed in exchanging the products of different places, and thereby rendering the necessities, conveniences, and comforts of human life more easy to be obtained, and more general, shall be allowed to pass free and unmolested; and neither of the contracting powers shall grant or issue any commission to any private armed vessels, empowering them to take or destroy such trading vessels, or interrupt such commerce."

The clause, wrote Jefferson afterwards, "was refused by England, and unwisely in my opinion. For, in the case of a war with us, their superior commerce would place [it] infinitely more at hazard on the ocean than ours; and as hawks abound in proportion to game, so our privateers would swarm in proportion to the wealth exposed to their prize, while theirs would be few for want of subjects of capture." In the middle of the nineteenth century, when privateering was at last abolished, Richard Cobden tried hard to induce the British Government to accept the American doctrine exempting from capture and destruction all peaceful ships and non-contraband cargoes, but in vain.<sup>1</sup> It was revived at the Hague conferences by the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Chancellor Loreburn renewed the effort in 1906; but the Foreign Office and Board of Admiralty again prevailed.



*Painted by Stuart*



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United States and again by President Wilson when he preached Freedom of the Seas at the end of the Great War. When this reform is finally adopted, by a more humane world, let it not be forgotten that Franklin and Jefferson were its pioneers. Their commercial negotiations had no other conspicuous results. Most of the European powers, Jefferson tells us, were indifferent. "They seemed in fact to know little about us, but as rebels who had been successful in throwing off the yoke of the Mother country. They were ignorant of our commerce, which had always been monopolised by England."

Early in 1785 the veteran Franklin, now infirm with age, resigned his post; and on March 10 Congress appointed Jefferson to succeed him as Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of France. At the same time John Adams was appointed to the Court of St. James'. Franklin had a wonderful send-off when he left Passy on July 12. His philosophy, wit, and wisdom, his statesmanship and tact, had won him the admiration of all France. Jefferson knew that Franklin was a difficult man to follow. "You replace M. Franklin I hear," said the Count de Vergennes. "I succeed, no one can replace him," was the reply. But it is doubtful whether America or any other country ever had a more useful or successful Ambassador than Jefferson. He belonged to the same political school as Franklin; he had the same love of science and inventions. He was less gay, less easy going, less cynical; he was earnest but prudent, candid but careful not to offend; and a proper sense of his diplomatic position prevented zeal from outrunning discretion. The *ancien régime* was passing away; it was Jefferson's lot to see something not only of the old Court and noblesse, but of the new spirit which was soon to overthrow them both. Many of the French



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officers who had served in the United States were his personal friends; above all Lafayette, who presently took the lead among the liberal aristocrats and patriots, was devoted to Jefferson and to the American cause. Though his *Notes on Virginia* had shown him to be a democrat of the democrats, a liberal of the liberals, Jefferson saw that the French people were not ready for a complete system of Republican self-government. He therefore hoped for gradual changes, and could honestly cultivate good relations with a King who was well inclined, and with ministers, several of whom were disposed to make large concessions to the reformers.

The Count de Vergennes, he says, had a reputation for being wary and slippery in diplomacy; "and so he might be with those whom he knew to be slippery and double-faced themselves. As he saw that I had no indirect views, practised no subtleties, meddled in no intrigues, pursued no concealed object, I found him as frank, as honourable, as easy of access to reason, as any man with whom I had ever done business; and I must say the same for his successor Montmorin, one of the most honest and worthy of human beings." The chief trouble of the Court and the Government at this time was finance. They could not balance their Budget, and their credit was not good either in France or in Holland. Nor, unfortunately for Jefferson, was that of Congress and of American business men. Jefferson's first object was to induce the French government to receive American exports such as tobacco, rice, grain, whale-oil, salted fish and salted meats, on easier terms, and to grant better conditions to American trade with the French West Indies. It was a task requiring much skill and patience; for the Farmers General and a host of vested interests supported all the abuses and re-

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strictions that oppressed the unfortunate people of France. By degrees Jefferson managed to gain considerable concessions to America, though he was constantly met by complaints that several American States were treating French traders badly. Arrangements with Congress, it was said, could not be depended on, and American justice was so tardy that French merchants looked upon American debts as 'desperate.' Worse still, Congress was too hard up to pay its domestic debts at all, and could only pay interest on its foreign debts by borrowing in Amsterdam. As the domestic six per cents stood below 60 when the Foreign fives stood above 90, some shrewd Dutch speculators began to buy up the domestic debt, hoping to force Congress to resume payment on this also by making it a condition of a new loan. The most awkward moment for Jefferson came early in 1788, when the new Constitution was adopted but not established. In March, John Adams, who was to be Vice-President, and had to return home, hurried over from London to meet Jefferson at the Hague to make arrangements if possible for tiding over the crisis by a new loan. Jefferson felt the humiliation keenly. "I was daily dunned," he wrote afterwards, "by a company who had formerly made a small loan to the United States, the principal of which was now become due; and our bankers in Amsterdam had notified me that the interest on our general debt would be expected in June; that if we failed to pay it, it would be deemed an act of bankruptcy, and would effectually destroy the credit of the United States, and all future prospect of obtaining money there." Jefferson started from Paris on March 4 by way of Valenciennes, Brussels, Antwerp, and Rotterdam, to the Hague. There he found Adams, and the two reached Amsterdam on the 10th. After some difficult negotiations

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they were successful in placing a new loan for a million florins, which would make the foreign credit of the United States safe for two years until the New Federal Administration had time to reorganise and balance its budget. They executed the necessary bonds, subject to the approval of Congress. The debt problem, so Jefferson wrote, pressed upon his mind 'like a mountain.' It made him ruminate and philosophise. After his experiences with Adams in Amsterdam, he took a trip through Germany, and soon after returning to Paris wrote a long letter (May 2) to General Washington, in the course of which he described the gradations of foreign credit in Amsterdam : —

"Much conversation with bankers, brokers and money holders, gave me insight into the state of national credit there, which I had never before been able satisfactorily to get. The English credit is the first, because they never open a loan, without laying and appropriating taxes for the payment of the interest; and there has never been an instance of their failing one day in that payment. The Emperor and Empress have good credit, because they use it little, and have hitherto been very punctual. This country is among the lowest, in point of credit. Ours stands in hope only. They consider us as the surest nation on earth for the payment of the capital; but as the punctual payment of interest is of absolute necessity in their arrangements, we cannot borrow but with difficulty and disadvantage. . . . The transfer of the French debt, public and private, to Amsterdam, is certainly desirable. An act of the new government, therefore, for opening a loan in Holland for the purpose, laying taxes at the same time for paying annually the interest and a part of the principal, will answer the two valuable purposes, of ascertaining the degree of our credit, and of removing those causes of bickering and irritation, which should never be permitted to subsist with a nation, with which it is so much our interest to be on cordial terms as with France. A very small portion of this debt, I mean that part due to the French officers, has done us an injury, of which those in office in America cannot have an idea. The interest is unpaid for the last three years; and these creditors, highly connected, and at the same time needy, have felt and communicated hard thoughts of us. Borrowing,

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as we have done, three hundred thousand florins a year, to pay our interest in Holland, it would have been worth while to have added twenty thousand more, to suppress those clamours. I am anxious about every thing which may affect our credit. My wish would be, to possess it in the highest degree, but to use it little."

Yet the Hamiltonians assure us that Jefferson knew nothing of public finance!

Apart from the public discredit into which Congress had fallen through failure to pay interest on its war debts, the private credit of American merchants was at this time in disrepute throughout Europe. After the peace of 1782, American importers, expecting an immense demand for all sorts of comforts and luxuries on the reopening of trade with Europe, had used all the credit they could obtain in London, Paris, and Amsterdam to buy goods. Naturally they had overbought, and the speculative mania was followed by a long series of fraudulent bankruptcies. Stories were circulated of swindlers living in luxury on the creditors whom they had robbed. Jefferson, utterly disgusted, began to wish that all commercial transactions in the United States might be placed on a cash basis. Luxury, debt, and discredit seemed to be threatening the simplicity of Republican manners and the safety of Republican institutions. He even suggested to one of his correspondents the advisability of enacting a law under which a man 'would see a prison painted' on everything he had not ready money to pay for!

From Jefferson the commercial and financial diplomatist we turn to Jefferson the observer and traveller.

First impressions of a new country by a man of genius are sure to be worth reading. From the outset Jefferson liked the French people. He found the society of Paris brilliant and congenial. Its savants and men of science,

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the liberal circle of Lafayette, the brilliant women of the salons who toyed with new ideas, courtiers, and diplomatists, English Radicals like Tom Paine or Benjamin Vaughan, philosophers like Dugald Stewart, American adventurers like Paul Jones or Ledyard, were all eager to converse with the celebrated author of the Declaration of Independence and the *Notes on Virginia*. And Jefferson played his part to perfection — Virginian in hospitality, American in political ideas, a match for all comers in learning and scholarship, in varied and accurate information about affairs, in ease and refinement; eager to learn, eager to impart, always ready to help a countryman, but a citizen of the world too, whose door was never closed to merit.

His first impression of the French nation, to be confirmed by future observation, was that of a good people oppressed by a harsh government. "Indeed" so he wrote to Mrs. Trist from Paris on August 18, 1785, "it is difficult to conceive how so good a people, with so good a king, so well-disposed rulers in general, so genial a climate, so fertile a soil, should be rendered so ineffectual for producing human happiness by one single curse — that of a bad form of government." Then he went on, with one of his wonted exaggerations: "but it is a fact, in spite of the mildness of their governors, the people are ground to powder by the vices of the form of government. Of twenty millions of people supposed to be in France I am of opinion there are nineteen millions more wretched, more accursed in every circumstance of human existence, than the most conspicuously wretched individual of the whole of the United States." Next month to another friend he declared, "I am savage enough to prefer the woods, the wilds and independence of Monticello to all the brilliant pleasures of this gay capital."

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During his first few months in Paris, Jefferson was on affectionate and intimate terms with John Adams and Abigail his wife, a Puritan of the Puritans, who heartily disliked Parisian morals and society, but loved and admired Jefferson, whom she described in a letter home as among 'the chosen of the earth.' Early in March, 1786, he rejoined his two friends in London, where John Adams had taken up his residence as American Minister and wanted Jefferson's aid to discuss commercial treaties with Great Britain and Portugal, and also to devise means of ransoming American citizens from the pirates of Tripoli and Tunis.

Their commercial negotiations with England were foredoomed to failure. It is true that Pitt, securely established in power after the wreck of the Fox-North coalition, was a disciple of Adam Smith and was adopting free-trade principles in commercial negotiations with Ireland and France. But George the Third could not forgive the American rebels, or tolerate the economic reconciliation which would have followed political separation, if British interests and common sense had ruled British policy. Shelburne, now Marquis of Lansdowne, was the only conspicuous person in politics who cared or dared to favour the American Republic. Lansdowne House and Bowood were open to liberal and radical thinkers like Priestley, Price, and Jeremy Bentham. Lansdowne's intimacy with Tom Paine and Benjamin Vaughan proves his courage as well as his intellectual independence of conventional restraints; his sympathy with the French Revolution was expressed in bold and outspoken opposition to the war in which a few years afterwards Pitt reluctantly engaged. In many respects Lansdowne was an aristocratic forerunner of Cobden and Bright; for his policy might be summed up in their favourite formula of Peace,

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Retrenchment, and Reform. But Lansdowne, the one English statesman whom Jefferson found friendly and congenial, was, as he saw clearly, a solitary figure without much influence even on the discredited Whig opposition. As for the King and Queen, to whom he was presented, nothing, he wrote, could have been 'more ungracious than their notice of Mr. Adams and myself.' He found stubborn hostility to any form of commercial reciprocity with America. As he put it to R. H. Lee, just before returning to Paris: "There is no party in our favour here either in power or out of power. Even the Opposition concur with the ministry and the nation in this. I can hardly consider as a party the Marquis of Lansdowne and a half dozen characters about him such as Dr. Price, etc., who are impressed with the utility of a friendly connection with us."<sup>1</sup> Even Lansdowne did not venture to express these sentiments in Parliament; and if he came into the ministry 'of which there is not the most distant prospect' he must adopt the King's system, 'or go out again, as he did before, for daring to depart from it.' The King's obstinacy was as well known as his embittered hostility to America. His sentiments were shared by the Tories and 'perhaps' by the nation. At the same time Jefferson wrote officially to John Jay, the Foreign Secretary, that he expected no change of disposition 'during the present reign.' Dr. Price, he added, acknowledged that the situation was desperate, 'which weighs the more as he is intimate with Mr. Pitt.' Jefferson and Adams had also the disagreeable task of interviewing a Committee of

<sup>1</sup> He must also have met Horne Tooke; for that most eccentric of English Radicals remarked to a friend in 1804: 'he had seen, knew, and respected Mr. Jefferson, who was a great man.' *Memoirs of Horne Tooke*, by A. Stephens, vol. II, p. 337.

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American Merchants in London, who were demanding payment of pre-war commercial debts under the treaty of peace. In reply, after pointing out breaches of the treaty on the British side, they observed that the amount of the debt was so great, and the coin circulating in the States so small, that immediate payment was impossible. Duncan Campbell, the President of the Committee, was reasonable enough and discussed the problem with Lord Caermarthen, Pitt's Foreign Secretary; but they heard no more on the matter. If Jefferson had known the British Foreign Office better, he would not have expected it to trouble much about a subject so unimportant as trade debts or commercial interests. On the whole his estimate of the situation proved unfortunately to be correct, and it was not until nearly the end of his life that anything like friendly relations could be established between the old monarchy and the new republic.

During this visit to England, which lasted nearly two months, Jefferson found time to travel to a good many places of interest, though he never got nearer to the home of his Welsh ancestors than Shropshire. He conveyed some of his impressions to his old friend John Page. Both town and country fell short of his expectations. Generally speaking, he thought the land less fruitful than France, but better cultivated, thanks to the long lease system. The agricultural labourers were better off than the French, and English rents were only about a third of the produce, whereas French were about half. In pleasure gardening, he declared rapturously, England 'surpasses all the earth.' He walked over many of them with Whately's book on gardening in his hand, and was struck by Whately's wonderful accuracy. His own inquiries, he says, "were directed chiefly to such practical things as might enable



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me to estimate the expense of making and maintaining a garden in that style." He visited the Duke of Devonshire's garden at Chiswick; Hampton Court; Enfield Chase; Woburn; Lady Francis Pelham's 45 acre garden at Esher Place; Paynshill with its costly grotto and Doric temple; Wotton ("much neglected" but "the water affords two thousand brace of carp a year"); Stowe; Leasowes in Shropshire where poor Shenstone had died of debt; Hagley, where Lord Wescot's ponds "yield a great deal of trout"; Moor Park with its thirty-acre lawn, and Blenheim, where he saw 212 acres of garden and over fifty men employed on the pleasure grounds alone. He notes that Rosamond's Bower was near by a little grove about two hundred yards from the palace. At Kew he inspected Archimedes's screw for raising water and made a diagram of it. His note on Pope's villa at Twickenham may be transcribed:—

*"Twickenham.* Pope's original garden was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres. Sir William Stanhope added  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres. This is a long, narrow slip, grass and trees in the middle, walk all round. Now Sir Wellbore Ellis's. Obelisk at bottom of Pope's garden as monument to his mother. Inscription, "Ah, Editha, matrum optima, mulierum amantissima, Vale." The house about thirty yards from the Thames: the ground shelves gently to the water side; on the back of the house passes the street, and beyond that the garden. The grotto is under the street and goes out level to the water. In the centre of the garden a mound with a spiral walk round it. A rookery."

Pope was a favourite poet of Jefferson's; but on these visits Jefferson writes mainly as a critical observer of gardens, garden landscapes, and a classical architecture. Thus at Stowe (then belonging to the Marquis of Buckingham) he observes, after praising the temples of Friendship and Venus: "In the approach to Stowe you are brought a mile through a straight avenue pointing to the

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Corinthian arch and to the house, till you get to the arch, then you turn short to the right. The straight approach is very ill. The Corinthian arch has a very useless appearance. . . . Instead of being an object from the house it obstructs a very pleasing distant prospect." It is not surprising that Jefferson should have visited Stowe. Besides that it abounded in classical imitations — there were too many heathen temples even for Horace Walpole — its princely gardens had been improved by "Capability" Brown, the famous landscape gardener, who had worked there from 1735 to 1750.

With Adams he visited Stratford on Avon; but Jefferson has left us nothing about their day there except an entry in his pocket book: "for seeing house where Shakespeare was born 1<sup>s</sup>; seeing his tomb 1<sup>s</sup>; entertainment 4<sup>s</sup> 2<sup>d</sup>; servants 2<sup>s</sup>." Nor, unfortunately, have we his reflections on Edgehill, where one of his Randolph ancestors fought on the king's side, or on royalist Oxford, the home of lost causes, where learning vegetated and science slept.

After the accident to his wrist he was advised by the physicians to try the mineral waters of Aix in Provence. He saw the opening of the Assembly of Notables on February 22, 1787; and then, after an interview with Montmorin, Vergennes's successor, started (February 28) on a journey which lasted until June, travelling as usual in his own carriage with post horses. He kept a journal as in England. There it was devoted to gardening, here mainly to agriculture, vineyards, and fruit. He passed through Champagne and Burgundy, and then down the valleys of Saône and Rhone to Nismes, where he examined and studied, with the eye of a skilled architect, the famous Maison Quarrée and other Roman antiquities. "Here I am," he wrote from Nismes, March 20, to the Comtesse

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de Tesse, "gazing whole hours at the Maison Quarrée like a lover at his mistress": —

From Lyons to Nismes I have been nourished with the remains of Roman grandeur. . . . At Vienne I thought of you. . . . The Praetorian Palace, as it is called — comparable for its fine proportions to the Maison Quarrée — defaced by the barbarians who have converted it to its present purpose, its beautiful fluted Corinthian columns cut out in part to make space for Gothic windows and hewed down in the residue to the plane of the building, was enough, you must admit, to disturb my composure. At Orange too I thought of you. I was sure you had seen with pleasure the sublime triumphal arch of Marius at the entrance of the city. I went then to the Arena.<sup>1</sup> Would you believe Madam that in this eighteenth century in France under the reign of Louis XVI they are at this moment pulling down the circular wall of this superb remain to pave a road? And that too from a hill which is itself an entire mass of stone just as fit and more accessible. . . . I thought of you again, and I was then in great good humor, at the Pont du Gard, a sublime antiquity and well-preserved. But most of all here, where Roman taste, genius and magnificence, excite ideas analogous to yours at every step."

He was, in fact, as he told his correspondent — she was the aunt of Madame de Lafayette — immersed in antiquities from morning to night. "For me the city of Rome is actually existing in all the splendor of its Empire. I am filled with alarms for the event of the irruptions daily making on us by the Goths, the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and Vandals, lest they should reconquer us to our original barbarism." All the same he found time for some reflections on the Assembly of the Notables, which the gifted lady doubtless passed on to Lafayette.

Passing from Nismes to Nice he devoted himself to fields and farms, culture and cultivators. "From the first olive fields of Pierrelatte to the orangeries of Hyères has been continued rapture to me. I have often wished for

<sup>1</sup> The Amphitheatre.

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you" — so he wrote to Lafayette, whose head he felt sure was 'full of Notable things' — and urged him to make this journey himself and inspect the condition of the French provinces. To do it effectually, "you must be absolutely incognito; you must ferret the people out of their hovels as I have done, look into their kettles, eat their bread, loll on their beds on pretense of resting yourself, but in fact to find if they are soft. You will feel a sublime pleasure in the course of this investigation, and a sublimer one hereafter, when you shall be able to apply your knowledge to the softening of their beds or the throwing a morsel of meat into their kettle of vegetables." From Nice he made his way to Coni on mules in search of "Piedmont rice," and thence to Turin and Tercelli. The government of Turin, knowing that their rice was the best of all varieties, had prohibited its exportation on pain of death even to other parts of Italy. This was a case where Free Trade principles justified smuggling; so Jefferson crammed his pockets with seed for despatch to friends in the Southern States. He did some business for his government towards increasing American commerce with Italy. Time prevented him from going further south than Milan and Genoa; and he was too busy investigating the culture of rice, capers, figs, and the olive tree ("which is assuredly the richest gift of heaven") to devote much attention to architecture, painting, and sculpture. He took with him some volumes of the classics and read the story of Hannibal, but satisfied himself that the descriptions were too vague, "to enable us at this day to guess at his track across the Alps." In a letter to Martha from Marseilles, giving details of his tour, "in order to exercise your geography" he told her of his fatiguing journey from Genoa back to Aix — "two days at sea and mortally sick, two

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more clambering the cliffs of the Appenines, and two others travelling by night as well as day without sleep." After a rest at Marseilles he sailed for a week along the Canal of Languedoc — cloudless skies above, limpid waters below, and nightingales in full chorus. "This delightful bird," he wrote to Martha, "had given me a rich treat before at the fountain of Vaucluse. After visiting the tomb of Laura at Avignon I went to see this fountain, — a noble one of itself and rendered for ever famous by the songs of Petrarch who lived near it." He hoped his daughter would be able to hear the nightingale in the garden of the convent, so that "when you return to your own country you may be able to estimate its merit in comparison with that of the mocking bird."

Let it not be supposed that we have given a full account of Jefferson's activities. His biographer Parton has devoted a lively chapter to his unofficial labours and amusements and hobbies — how he kept Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, and Philadelphia apprised of new inventions and new books; how he conversed at Paris with Bolton, Watts's partner, learnt about the wonderful steam engine, and actually saw one at work in London; how he studied the manufacture of watches, and described the new system of standardizing their parts; how he investigated the latest devices used in the construction of canals and locks, and forwarded particulars to General Washington; how he scoured Paris for new and improved lamps; how he contrived a portable copying press, and so on and so on, of which details are to be found in his voluminous correspondence. At Paris his favourite recreation in the afternoon was a stroll among the bookstalls, where he gathered many rare books not only for the enlargement of his own library but for Madison, Wythe, and other friends, to

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whom also he forwarded volumes of the Encyclopædia as they appeared. He found time to plan the Capitol at Richmond on the model of the Maison Quarrée; and though his plan was modified by an architect for the worse, yet Fiske Kimball in his valuable book *Thomas Jefferson, Architect*, declares that "both in form and in principle the Virginia Capitol was the first work of the classical revival in the United States . . . and is a landmark of first importance."

Last but not least we must recall Jefferson's services to American agriculture. He sent seeds of various grasses, acorns of the cork oak, a whole cargo of olive plants, and information about innumerable fruits and vegetables to agricultural societies, scientific farmers, and botanists in Charleston, Philadelphia, and elsewhere. It is said that his gifts of Italian rice to the planters of South Carolina enabled them to produce the best rice in the world. He sent them also seed rice from the Levant, from Egypt, from the East Indies, and from Cochin China, which last he procured from a "young prince of that country lately gone from hence." Was there ever such an Ambassador?

## CHAPTER II

### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

“See  
What crimes it costs to be a moment free.”  
— BYRON

JEFFERSON'S part in the early scenes of the French Revolution — while reform was still the watchword; before reason had yielded to passion and order to chaos — deserves attention for several reasons. He was an eye witness, a vigilant and competent observer of all that passed from the Assembly of the Notables in February, 1787, to the storming of the Bastille in July, 1789. But he was much more than an observer. In spite of his diplomatic position and a delicate sense of its proprieties he saw what went on from the inside as well as from the outside. Lafayette, the most energetic of the Patriots or Reformers, was his confidential friend, his pupil in the art and theory of government, looking to him at every crisis for guidance and counsel. His own republicanism was unimpeachable. His faith in popular government, his championship of popular rights, his passion for individual liberty were known to all. Yet from the moment when he saw light breaking through the long darkness of oppression, from the moment when he saw the edifice of tyranny beginning to crumble, he was for moderation and piecemeal reform. Those who tried later on to represent Jefferson as a Jacobin, a leveller, a fanatic, on the strength of a few violent sentences and exaggerated phrases

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wrenched from his private letters, have strangely distorted his political and public character; for the uncompromising idealist in theory was always moderated and controlled by the realist who sought the attainable, measuring with practiced eye times, seasons, and opportunities. Never were his prescience and sagacity put to a more severe test than in 1788 and 1789, when he might well have been tempted to join the doctrinaires who were for sweeping away all obstacles and encumbrances, all customs and institutions in order to found a new system of government on abstract formulas and natural rights. But he looked at the people. He saw ignorance, superstition, total inexperience of self-government. He felt that the "Illumination" was too partial and too superficial to support a revolution or to maintain a republic with success. His whole influence therefore was on the side of limiting the monarchy, aiming rather at an English than an American constitution. "Be moderate; take what you can get without violence; encourage the King to travel quietly along the road which leads to a tolerable and workable government" — this is the sum and substance of his counsels to the Patriots. In his autobiographical Memoir a very careful and even minute account is given of these transactions. "I was," he writes, "in circumstances peculiarly favorable for a knowledge of the truth. Possessing the confidence and intimacy of the leading Patriots, and more than all of the Marquis Fayette, their head and Atlas, who had no secrets from me, I learned with correctness the views and proceedings of that party; while my intercourse with the diplomatic missionaries of Europe at Paris, all of them with the court, and eager in prying into its councils and proceedings, gave me a knowledge of these also. My information was always and immediately com-



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mitted to writing in letters to Mr. Jay and often to my friends, and a recurrence to these letters now insures me against errors of memory."

Students of the French Revolution in its early stages, who wish to form a judgment upon the conduct and wisdom of the Patriots, and upon the reasons why a mild well-meaning monarch lost his throne and his head, will find good material in the pages of Jefferson's Memoir and in his correspondence. To follow his letters and narrative in detail is beyond our present scope, and we must be content with a brief sketch of Jefferson's opinions and observations. He dates the commencement of the Reforms, which through bad fortune or bad management ended in revolution, from the decision made towards the end of 1786 to convene an assembly of the Notables, an ancient practice which had not been resorted to since 1626. The reason for this was that Calonne, the Finance Minister, had come to the end of his tether. He had acted on a principle best described in his own words: "A man who requires to borrow must appear rich, and to appear rich he must dazzle by his expenditure." For a time he had been successful; but the credit of the state was now exhausted. Confidence, inflated by profusion and extravagance, had evaporated; so the minister proposed to the King that they should call the notables, restore the Turgot programme, induce the wealthy to bear their fair share of taxation, and so get rid of the deficit. Unfortunately Vergennes, whose influence with the privileged nobles and clergy might have induced them to accept Calonne's projects, died in February, 1787, just before the Notables met; and his successor, Count de Montmorin, lacked the strength, capacity, and reputation to carry sweeping measures of reform.

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In his account of the more remote causes of the French Revolution, Jefferson lays stress upon American influences. Celebrated writers, he says, had already sketched good principles on the subject of government; but it was the American Revolution that first awakened the thinking part of the French nation from the sleep of despotism. The officers who returned from America were mostly young men comparatively free from the shackles of habit and prejudice, and therefore open to suggestions of common sense and to notions of common rights. They returned full of new ideas and impressions, which were soon disseminated in the press. "Conversation assumed new freedom; politics became the theme of all societies, male and female; and a very extensive and zealous party was formed, which acquired the appellation of the Patriotic Party, who — sensible of the abusive government under which they lived — sighed for occasions of reforming it. This party comprehended all the honesty of the kingdom, sufficiently at leisure to think — the men of letters, the easy *bourgeois*, the young nobility, partly from reflection, partly from mode." It happened that the dissipations of the Queen and court, the abuses of the Pension List, and a dilapidated administration had exhausted the public credit. To impose new taxes by the authority of the King was known to be impossible, and the only resource therefore was to appeal to the nation which might be induced to grant money to the government if the King and his ministers would consent to the Reforms so long overdue.

Calonne's financial character and accounts would not bear scrutiny. Villedieu took his place, and Lomenie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, was appointed chief Minister. On his return from Holland in April, 1787, Jefferson found Paris in high ferment. The Archbishop was

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too slow in carrying out the Reform measures. New claims began to be advanced, and the Patriots pressed for a fixed Constitution, independent of the king's will:—

“Nor should we wonder at this pressure,” so runs the Memoir, “when we consider the monstrous abuses of power under which this people were ground to powder; when we pass in review the weight of their taxes and the inequality of their distribution; the oppression of the tythes, the *tailles*, the *corvées*, the *gabelles*, the farms and the barriers; the shackles on commerce by monopolies, on industry by guilds and corporations, on the freedom of conscience, of thought, and of speech, on the freedom of the press by the *censure* and of the person by *lettres de cachet*; the cruelty of the criminal code generally; the atrocities of the rack; the venality of judges, and their partialities to the rich; the monopoly of military honors by the *noblesse*; the enormous expenses of the Queen, the Princes and the Court, the prodigalities of pensions; and the riches, luxury, indolence, and immorality of the Clergy.”

Most people will probably agree with Jefferson that “under such a mass of misrule and oppression the people might justly press for thorough reformation.” The discontent grew until at last, in July, 1788, the King gave way and promised to call the States General in May of the ensuing year. The Archbishop retired to accept a Cardinal's hat, and Necker amid popular rejoicings was summoned to the Department of Finance. Then began a dispute about the composition of the States General; and eventually it was decided in deference to the popular voice that the deputies of Tiers État, or Commons, should be equal in numbers to the Nobles and Clergy. At the end of 1788 Necker suggested some important concessions, which the King was ready to give. But his good resolutions were overruled by the Queen and the court until at last their resistance was overcome by famine and starvation. The winter of 1788–1789 was one of the coldest on record. So scarce, writes Jefferson, was bread

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in Paris that the bakers were only permitted to deal out a scanty allowance even to those who paid for it, "and in cards of invitation to dine in the richest houses the guest was notified to bring his own bread." Jefferson was very busy helping on supplies from the United States, whence between March and May, 1789, twenty-one thousand barrels of flour were imported. After the opening of the States General, in the beginning of May, Jefferson went daily from Paris to Versailles and attended their debates, generally till the hour of adjournment. He describes the *Jeu de Paume* and the Oath of the Commons delegates that they would never separate of their own accord till they had settled a National Constitution. He tells of the revolt of the aristocracy, of the vacillation of the King, and of Necker's offer of resignation : —

"The *Noblesse* were in triumph; the people in consternation. I was quite alarmed at this state of things. The soldiery had not yet indicated which side they should take, and that which they should support would be sure to prevail. I considered a successful reformation of government in France as insuring a general reformation through Europe, and the resurrection to a new life of their people now ground to dust by the abuses of the governing powers. I was much acquainted with the leading Patriots of the Assembly. Being from a country which had successfully passed through a similar reformation they were disposed to my acquaintance and had some confidence in me. I urged most strenuously an immediate compromise; to secure what the government was now ready to yield, and trust to future occasions for what might still be wanting."

It was understood that the King would grant *habeas corpus*, freedom of conscience and of the press, trial by jury, a representative assembly with annual meetings and the right to originate laws and lay taxes, and finally the responsibility of ministers. Jefferson rightly thought

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that this would give the Patriots all that was necessary.<sup>1</sup>

"They thought otherwise however and events proved their lamentable error. For after thirty years of war foreign and domestic"—he was writing in 1821—"the loss of millions of lives, the prostration of private happiness, and the foreign subjugation of their own country for a time, they have obtained no more, nor even that securely. They were unconscious of (for who could foresee?) the melancholy sequel of their well-meant perseverance: that their physical force would be usurped by a first tyrant [Napoleon] to trample on the independence and even the existence of other nations: that this would afford a fatal example for the atrocious conspiracy of kings against their people; would generate their unholy and homicidal alliance to make common cause among themselves, and to crush by the power of the whole the efforts of any part to moderate their abuses and oppressions."

In June, as the rupture between the court and the Commons became known, signs of disaffection to the King appeared among the French Guards. "The operation of this medicine at Versailles," writes Jefferson, "was as sudden as it was powerful." Instead of supporting the Clergy and nobles against the Tiers, the King ordered them to take their seats with the Tiers, and thus the union of orders in one chamber was complete. Thereupon the Assembly began to frame a constitution, beginning with a declaration of the rights of man prepared and proposed by Lafayette. But early in July the King was persuaded by the aristocratic party to attempt to restore the royal authority by force. Necker was dismissed; the Ministry was changed. The Marshal de Broglie, "a high-flying aristocrat, cool and capable of everything" was appointed to command the troops. A body of German cavalry was

<sup>1</sup> Thus on February 28, 1787, Jefferson had written to Lafayette urging him to follow "the good model of England" by going "step by step towards a good Constitution . . . if every advance is to be purchased by filling the royal coffers with gold, it will be gold well employed."

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drawn up in the Place Louis XV, supported by some Swiss soldiers. Crowds of people gathered and posted themselves behind some large piles of stones. "In this position," says Jefferson, "happening to be in my carriage on a visit, I passed through the lane they had formed without interruption. But the moment after I had passed the people attacked the cavalry with stones." The Germans charged, but showers of stones obliged them to retire. "This was the signal for universal insurrection; and this body of cavalry, to avoid being massacred, retired toward Versailles. The people now armed themselves with such weapons as they could find in armorers' shops and private houses, and with bludgeons; and were roaming all night through all parts of the city without any decided object." Next day, July 13, the people were joined by the French Guards; on the 14th they stormed the Bastille, and executed the Governor. Versailles was now alarmed. The new Ministers resigned; Necker was recalled; the King came to Paris and drove in procession. The Assembly marched on foot. The Marquis de Lafayette as Commander in Chief rode on horseback with bourgeois guards before and behind. The streets were lined by sixty thousand citizens "armed with the conquests of the Bastille and Invalides as far as they would go, the rest with pistols, swords, pikes, pruning hooks, scythes, etc." Everywhere the crowds saluted the procession with cries of "Vive la Nation"; not a single "Vive le Roi" was heard. But after the King had adopted the popular cockade, shouts were raised of "Vive le Roi et la Nation," and he was conducted by a *Garde bourgeoise* back to his palace at Versailles. Thus, writes Jefferson, was concluded "such an *amende honorable* as no sovereign ever made and no people ever received." But alas "here again was lost another precious

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occasion of sparing to France the crimes and cruelties through which she has since passed, and to Europe, and finally America the evils which flowed on them also from this mortal source": — .

"The King was now become a passive machine in the hands of the National Assembly, and had he been left to himself he would have willingly acquiesced in whatever they should devise as best for the nation. A wise Constitution would have been formed, hereditary in his line, himself placed at its head, with powers so large as to enable him to do all the good of his station, and so limited, as to restrain him from its abuse. This he would have faithfully administered, and more than this I do not believe he ever wished. But he had a Queen of absolute sway over his weak mind and timid virtue, and of a character the reverse of his in all points. This angel, as gaudily painted in the rhapsodies of Burke, with some smartness of fancy, but no sound sense, was proud, disdainful of restraint, indignant at all obstacles to her will, eager in the pursuit of pleasure, and firm enough to hold to her desires, or perish in their wreck. Her inordinate gambling and dissipations, with those of the Count d'Artois, and others of her *clique*, had been a sensible item in the exhaustion of the treasury, which called into action the reforming hand of the nation; and her opposition to it, her inflexible perverseness and dauntless spirit, led herself to the guillotine, drew the King on with her, and plunged the world into crimes and calamities which will forever stain the pages of modern history. I have ever believed, that had there been no Queen, there would have been no revolution. . . . The deed which closed the mortal course of these sovereigns, I shall neither approve nor condemn. I am not prepared to say, that the first magistrate of a nation cannot commit treason against his country. . . . Of those who judged the King, many thought him wilfully criminal; many, that his existence would keep the nation in perpetual conflict with the horde of kings, who would war against a regeneration which might come home to themselves, and that it were better that one should die than all. I should not have voted with this portion of the legislature. I should have shut up the Queen in a convent, putting harm out of her power, and placed the King in his station, investing him with limited powers, which, I verily believe, he would have honestly exercised, according to the measure of his understanding. In this way, no void would have been created, courting the usurpation of a military adven-

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turer, nor occasion given for those enormities which demoralized the nations of the world, and destroyed, and is yet to destroy, millions and millions of its inhabitants."

Jefferson's stay in Paris was now drawing to a close. Necker and Montmorin were restored to office, and the Assembly appointed a committee to project a Constitution. Its chairman, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, on July 20 wrote Jefferson a letter requesting him to attend and assist at their deliberations; but Jefferson excused himself on the ground of his official duties. The Committee soon got into difficulties, and schisms of opinion "broke the Patriots into fragments of very discordant principles." They agreed that the Government of France should be monarchical. But should the King have a veto on legislation? Should there be two Chambers? If so should one be hereditary? or nominative? or elective? As dissensions grew in their ranks the patriot leaders became alarmed. "In this uneasy state of things," writes Jefferson, "I received one day a note from the Marquis de Lafayette informing me that he should bring a party of six or eight friends to ask a dinner of me next day":—

"I assured him of their welcome. When they arrived they were La Fayette himself, Duport, Barnave, Alexander la Meth, Blacon, Mounier, Maubourg, and Dagout. These were leading Patriots, of honest but differing opinions, sensible of the necessity of effecting a coalition by mutual sacrifices, knowing each other, and not afraid, therefore, to unbosom themselves mutually. This last was a material principle in the selection. With this view the Marquis had invited the conference, and had fixed the time and place inadvertently, as to the embarrassment under which it might place me. The cloth being removed, and wine set on the table after the American manner, the Marquis introduced the objects of the conference by summarily reminding them of the state of things in the Assembly, the course which the principles of the Constitution were



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taking, and the inevitable result, unless checked by more concord among the Patriots themselves. He observed, that although he also had his opinion, he was ready to sacrifice it to that of his brethren of the same cause; but that a common opinion must now be formed, or the Aristocracy would carry everything, and that, whatever they should now agree on, he, at the head of the national force, would maintain. The discussions began at the hour of four, and were continued till ten o'clock in the evening; during which time I was a silent witness to a coolness and candour of argument, unusual in the conflicts of political opinion; to a logical reasoning, and chaste eloquence, disfigured by no gaudy tinsel of rhetoric or declamation, and truly worthy of being placed in parallel with the finest dialogues of antiquity, as handed to us by Xenophon, by Plato, and Cicero. The result was, that the King should have a suspensive veto on the laws, that the legislature should be composed of a single body only, and that chosen by the people. This *Concordat* decided the fate of the constitution. The Patriots all rallied to the principles thus settled, carried every question agreeably to them, and reduced the aristocracy to insignificance and impotence. But duties of exculpation were now incumbent on me. I waited on Count Montmorin the next morning, and explained to him with truth and candour how it happened that my house had been made the scene of conferences of such a character. He told me he already knew everything which had passed; that so far from taking umbrage at the use made of my house on that occasion, he earnestly wished I would habitually assist at such conferences, being sure I should be useful in moderating the warmer spirits, and promoting a wholesome and practicable reformation only. I told him I knew too well the duties I owed to the King, to the nation, and to my own country, to take any part in councils concerning their internal government, and that I should persevere with care in the character of a neutral and passive spectator, with wishes only, and very sincere ones, that those measures might prevail which would be for the greatest good of the nation. I have no doubt indeed, that this conference was previously known and approved by this honest minister, who was in confidence and communication with the Patriots, and wished for a reasonable reform of the constitution."

At this point Jefferson's narrative of the French Revolution concludes. He was now ready to return home — for a short holiday as he supposed, but as it turned out for

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the rest of his days. His account of these stirring events has been very briefly resumed ; but enough has been set down to show the wisdom of his counsels and the prudence of his conduct.

## CHAPTER III

### THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

"The perfection consists in this, that out of many moderate varieties . . . arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure."  
— MILTON

WE must now return to events less important to Europe but of mighty consequence to the New World.

The form of union submitted to Congress in November, 1777 and adopted by the thirteen States in March, 1781—a loose confederacy without a President or executive other than committees of Congress—had proved unsatisfactory. Congress, it has been said, was a mere Rump without dignity or power. Its finances instead of being restored after the peace went to rack and ruin; its army dwindled to eighty men; it was "despised abroad and disobeyed at home." The first thing needful was to balance the budget; so in 1786 the States were asked to amend the Articles of Confederation by empowering Congress to collect revenue by customs duties on imports. All the States except New York agreed, but the New York veto could not be surmounted. A remedy was urgent. At last in May, 1787, a Convention met in Philadelphia to draw up a constitution. Over this Convention Washington presided. Its proceedings were secret; but from very accurate notes taken by James Madison and published after his death, we know how the constitution was hatched out, and what were the constitutional

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aims of the leading men who took part.<sup>1</sup> In his *Memoir* Jefferson gives a succinct account of the need for a closer union, and of his own views on the Constitution adopted by the Convention. The fundamental defect of the Confederation, he says, was that Congress had no authority to act immediately and by its own officers. Its requisitions had to be addressed to the several State legislatures, and compliance was voluntary. Thus every State legislature had a negative on every measure proposed by Congress. No wonder that it lost credit abroad and at home. But State patriotism was naturally jealous of centralisation, and there were still Antifederalists like Patrick Henry who could not be persuaded of the need for closer Union. Jefferson was not one of them. He saw as clearly as Madison the urgent need of a better constitution to ensure peace, justice, liberty, common defence, and general welfare.<sup>2</sup>

The Convention sat with closed doors at Philadelphia from May 25, 1787, until September 17, when the results of its labours were published. Jefferson received a copy early in November. At that time the Constitution was still *sub judice*, open to criticism and subject to confirmation by the thirteen States. Jefferson approved most of the articles, but thought some objectionable. He especially disliked that which made the President re-eligible for life, and felt very strongly the absence of express guarantees to secure freedom of religion and of the press, freedom of the person by *habeas corpus*, and trial by

<sup>1</sup> All the available materials are collected and skilfully edited in *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787* by Max Farrand, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> Jefferson wrote to Madison on March 31, 1787: "That a thorough reform of the existing system is indispensable, no one who has a capacity to judge will deny; and with hand and heart I hope the business will be essayed in a full convention."

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jury in criminal as well as in civil cases; for, as he knew full well, a republican form of government is quite compatible with oppression, and he held that the individual citizen is entitled to protection against misrule and intolerance. In letters to his friends, especially to Madison and Washington, he expressed these opinions freely and urged the desirability of amendments. But the whole Constitution might have been endangered if it were referred back to a new Convention. Eventually a proposal of Massachusetts was carried — with the hearty concurrence of Jefferson — that the Constitution should be adopted as it stood and that amendments should follow. The party supporting the new Constitution were called Federalists; and their opponents, who thought that the new government would be too powerful *vis-à-vis* the States, were called Antifederalists. After the contest had lasted a good many months, the Constitution was finally adopted, largely through the influence of a series of papers written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay over the joint signature of 'Publius.' These papers, known as *The Federalist*, speedily won, and have ever since justly retained, world-wide celebrity both as a powerful defence of the American constitution and as a treatise on Government. Jefferson read the work in Paris with unqualified admiration, and ever afterwards recommended it along with Coke, Locke, Sidney, and a few other favourite authors to those who asked him for guidance in political studies.

Considering that the Constitution was framed during Jefferson's absence, and that his influence was only felt indirectly through Madison and his other friends, he had reason to rejoice that it so nearly tallied with his theories. The amendments he desired respecting the press, religion,

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and juries, with several others of great value, were made by Congress in the first session of the first Congress, which met in the spring of 1789 after George Washington and John Adams had taken office as President and Vice-President. It is true that no amendment to provide against a re-election of the President was proposed. Jefferson was uneasy about this, having observed in feudal history and in the recent case of the Stadtholder of Holland "how easily offices, or tenures for life, slide into inheritances." His own proposal was that the President should be elected for a single term of seven years, and should be ever afterwards ineligible. But during Washington's lifetime he was content to leave things alone, though he had the candour and courage to press his views on Washington himself.<sup>1</sup> In the end custom settled the question satisfactorily. Washington retired after his second term; so did Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. Reviewing the matter in his old age Jefferson thought the practice adopted, allowing the President continuance for eight years, with a liability to be dropped half-way, better than his own original proposal. As he remarked: "the example of four Presidents, voluntarily retiring at the end of their eighth year, and the progress of public opinion that the principle is salutary, have given it in practice the force of precedent and usage; in so much that should a President consent to be a candidate for a third election I trust he would be rejected on this demonstration of ambitious views."

It may be asked why Jefferson was so anxious to limit the President's tenure of office. It was not only because the American President was invested with enormous

<sup>1</sup> Paris, May 2, 1788. It was in this letter that he wrote: "there is not a crowned head in Europe whose talents or merits would entitle him to be elected a vestryman by the people of any parish in America."

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power. There was another reason. The miserable weakness of Congressional Government after the war had created a considerable body of opinion, especially in the Eastern States, in favour of a strong central Government with a strong executive and a standing army which could be used to protect property and to overawe the proletariat. But this justifiable anxiety for a strong Government was associated with monarchical and aristocratic institutions. It was believed by many that Republican Government was only suitable for a City State or a small country like Switzerland. In spite of the wounds left by the war a cult, more or less esoteric, had grown up in New England and also in New York (where a large section of society had remained loyalist until the end of the war) which inculcated the superiority of the British Constitution over all others. The leaders of this cult or clique found guidance and inspiration in Alexander Hamilton, a native of the British West Indies, who had crossed as a boy to seek his fortune in New York shortly before the outbreak of the war, had thrown himself with ardour into the American cause, had won the favour of Washington, and was now a successful pleader at the New York bar as well as a rising politician. As the story of Jefferson's public career in the last decade of the eighteenth century and of American party politics for a much longer period turns on the opposing principles of Jefferson and Hamilton, and of the perfectly honourable though bitter antagonism between these two ardent men of genius, a word must be said about Hamilton's character and opinions in order to make their future controversy intelligible.

Hamilton was a dashing soldier, a favourite with the ladies, a leader in New York society, a man of fashion, a fine speaker, an excellent writer, one of the best journal-

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ists of his day, well read in political literature, opinionated, dissolute, full of projects, and immensely ambitious. From his Scottish ancestry perhaps, he inherited a good conceit of himself, from a mixture of Scottish and French blood he may also have inherited a love of force, which, mingled with a hearty contempt for the self-governing capacity of the people, helps to explain the aims, objects, and disappointments of his career. His talents were united with great capacity for work. There was no stronger advocate, no more formidable opponent, of a project or a policy than Alexander Hamilton. As a political pamphleteer he had no rival save Madison, and Madison's work lacks the verve and animation of Hamilton's. It was only after a long struggle, whose shifting fortunes provide us with constant excitement, that he was at last decisively defeated by Jefferson's superiority in temper, tact, strategy, and above all in understanding of the common folk and sympathy with their needs and aspirations.

In Jefferson's *Ana* we learn that at the Annapolis Convention of 1786 "a difference of opinion was evident on the question of a Republican or Kingly government; yet so general through the States was the sentiment in favor of the former that the friends of the latter confined themselves to a course of obstruction only, and delay to everything proposed; they hoped that nothing being done, and all things going from bad to worse, a kingly government might be usurped, and submitted to by the people, as better than anarchy and wars."<sup>1</sup> From Mar-

<sup>1</sup> They found support for their views in the insurrection led by Daniel Shays — an American Jack Cade — against the Government of Massachusetts in the winter of 1786-1787. It was a revolt of farmers in the mountain districts, who refused to pay taxes. Jefferson made light of it, and even represented it as a healthy sign of popular interest in Government.



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shall's *Life of Washington*, from the letters of Jay, and others, it is clear that the advocates of monarchical government, though weak in numbers, were strong in influence. Even Washington felt that for some time Republicanism would be on probation. At the Philadelphia Convention, from which the present Constitution of the United States was to emerge in September, 1787, Alexander Hamilton on June 18 proposed a plan of Government for the thirteen States of the Union. The President and Senate were to be elected during good behaviour, *i.e.* practically for life; and the State Governments were to be reduced to complete legislative and administrative dependence on the central Government of the Union, which was to appoint their executives and exercise a veto on their laws, besides having power to institute Courts in each State "for the determination of all matters of general concern." A good summary of Hamilton's speech has been preserved in Madison's notes of the Convention. At that time he and Hamilton were close friends, and he submitted his notes of the speech to Hamilton at the time, "who approved of its correctness with one or two verbal changes, which were made as he suggested." One or two quotations will make Hamilton's outlook clear:—

"This view of the subject [the difficulties of a Federative Union] almost led him to despair that a Republican Government could be established over so great an extent. He was sensible at the same time that it would be unwise to propose one of any other form. In his private opinion he had no scruple in declaring, supported as he was by the opinions of so many of the wise and good, that the British Government was the best in the world; and that he doubted much whether any short of it would do in America. . . . The members most tenacious of Republicanism, he observed, were as loud as any in declaiming against the vices of democracy. This progress of the public mind led him to anticipate the time when others as well as himself would join in the

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praise bestowed by Mr. Necker on the British Constitution, namely that it is the only Government in the world 'which unites public strength with individual security.' . . . Their House of Lords is a most noble institution. Having nothing to hope by a change, and a sufficient interest by means of their property in being faithful to the national interest, they form a permanent barrier against every pernicious innovation whether attempted on the part of the Crown or of the Commons. No temporary Senate will have firmness enough to answer the purpose. . . . As to the executive, it seemed to be admitted that no good one could be established on Republican principles. Was not this giving up the merits of the question? For can there be a good government without a good executive? The English model was the only good one on the subject. The hereditary interest of the King was so interwoven with that of the nation, and his personal emoluments so great, that he was placed above the danger of being corrupted from abroad, and at the same time was both sufficiently independent and sufficiently controlled to answer the purpose of the institution at home."

From Madison's report and from his own notes for this elaborate speech, which have been preserved in Hamilton's papers, his ideal government is seen to be a mixed Constitution consisting of three Estates — a wealthy King, wealthy hereditary Lords or Senators, and an elected House of Commons — balancing and controlling one another.

Although the Constitution actually adopted was a long way from Hamilton's theories and ideals, it was still more obnoxious to those who disliked any encroachment upon the autonomy of the individual States, and was violently assailed on this ground by Patrick Henry and others. Hamilton, accordingly, with admirable promptitude threw himself into the contest with Madison and Jay as a Federalist, laid aside for a time his own opinions, and exerted himself with tongue and pen to persuade New York and other wavering States to adopt the Constitution as framed by the Convention. The breach between him and Madi-

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son came early in Washington's First Administration, when Hamilton, to use Madison's words, began "to administer the Government into what he thought it ought to be; while on my part I endeavored to make it conform to the Constitution as understood by the Convention that produced and recommended it, and particularly by the State Conventions that *adopted* it." Hamilton found the path to centralisation strewn with thorns, and after retiring from office he grew more and more discontented with the Constitution. In a letter to Gouverneur Morris in February, 1802, he called it a "frail and worthless fabric" though a month or two later he still hoped to make such improvements in it as would "keep in check demagogues and knaves in the disguise of patriots." His views were really dominated by a profound distrust of democracy and a belief that the masses, being governed by passion rather than by reason, require to be ruled from above. Gouverneur Morris, an intimate friend of Hamilton, who was chosen to deliver his funeral oration, wrote to a correspondent in 1811: "General Hamilton had little share in forming the Constitution. He disliked it, believing all republican government to be radically defective. . . . He heartily assented nevertheless to the Constitution, because he considered it a band which might hold us together for some time. . . . He trusted, moreover, that in the changes and chances of time we should be involved in some war which might strengthen our union and nerve our executive." These being Hamilton's real views, it was hardly possible that there should not eventually be a clash with Jefferson. To suppose that either Madison or Jefferson broke with Hamilton because they regarded him as a rival and were jealous of his talents and energy is ridiculous.

There is a class of mean-spirited writers who cannot

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allow that a statesman whom they dislike ever acts from high motives, or that one whom they adulate ever acts from low ones. But Jefferson went into public life and remained in it, because he believed in republican principles, desired to extend democracy, and was resolved if possible that his fellow citizens should enjoy a full measure of individual liberty. He thought that the majority had a right to rule, and that the poorest citizen had as good a right to vote as the richest. He detested the hereditary principle, and would have rejoiced if every hereditary aristocracy and every king could have been got rid of peaceably. He did not care for power, still less for place or patronage for its own sake. He was so fond of country life and books and science and mechanics that it is very doubtful whether he would have troubled much about politics if his principles had always been in the ascendant. There is no instance of his trying to push out any honest Republican who threatened to be a rival or a competitor for the party leadership. On the contrary at the critical moment he tried hard to substitute Madison for himself as Republican candidate for the Presidency. His opposition to Hamilton arose not at all on personal grounds but solely on public measures.

In his Memoir Jefferson tells us, as indeed appears from his correspondence with Jay, that he had been asking leave of absence more than a year before he actually got it. His younger daughter Maria had joined him; but he felt that both children had had enough of French society and education. His own intention was to take them both home and then return himself for a short time to his station at Paris. It was, however, not until August, 1789, that he received leave of absence. He left Paris on September 26 for Havre, where they were held up for nearly a fort-

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night by contrary winds. On the 9th he says, "I crossed over to Cowes, where I had engaged the Cleremont, Capt. Colley, to touch for me." Here again they were detained, and spent some days in the Isle of Wight. They embarked on October 22, and landed at Norfolk on November 23. To the end of his life he entertained a strong affection for the French people, among whom he had enjoyed so much hospitality and acquired so many friends. "Their eminence too in science," he remarked, "the politeness of the general manners, the ease and vivacity of their conversation, give a charm to their society to be found nowhere else."

BOOK IV  
OFFICE UNDER PRESIDENT WASHINGTON  
CHAPTER I

SECRETARY OF STATE

“Immediately on his return to his native country, at the organization of the government under the present Constitution, his talents and experience recommended him to President Washington for the first office in his gift. He was placed at the head of the Department of State. In this situation, also, he manifested conspicuous ability. His correspondence with the ministers of other Powers residing here and his instructions to our diplomatic agents abroad are among our ablest State papers. A thorough knowledge of the laws and usages of nations, perfect acquaintance with the immediate subject before him, great felicity, and still greater facility in writing, show themselves in whatever effort his official situation called on him to make.”

— DANIEL WEBSTER, August 2, 1826

As wars seldom go according to programme, so revolutions planned by lovers of freedom when carried by violence have too often ended in military despotism. The sword drawn for liberty is not easily sheathed until order — and tyranny — are restored. It was so after the execution of Charles in England and of Louis in France. The American Republic was more fortunate. If it had lost George Washington as England lost John Hampden; or if, like the French Republic, it had been attacked by powerful enemies, it might not have survived the ordeal of 1782 to 1787. At one time the ship of State seemed

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to be sinking in bankruptcy and discredit. But public spirit revived; moderation prevailed; the men who framed the Constitution were ready to work it. Their task was formidable. "We are in a wilderness without a single footstep to guide us" wrote Madison from Congress to Jefferson in June, 1789. At that time Washington was installed in office; but he had not yet formed a Cabinet; and who could be sure that the victorious general would prove a successful ruler? Perhaps no one else could have succeeded. Seldom has a new ship of state set to sea in worse weather. When all credit has been given to others it is mainly to the patience, courage, perseverance, practical wisdom, and disinterested patriotism of Washington that the nation owed its deliverance. He was the pilot who weathered the storm.

Washington chose his Cabinet with deliberation. In September, when Congress had passed a Bill establishing the Department of the Treasury, he offered the Secretaryship to Alexander Hamilton, who accepted it with the eagerness of youthful ambition, though he could ill afford to relinquish his practice at the New York Bar for a salary of 3500 dollars a year. At the same time the War Department was entrusted to General Henry Knox, a Bostonian, who after serving throughout the war with credit, had been retained by Congress to control military affairs. Knox was popular with the disbanded soldiers and especially with the officers, who at his suggestion had formed themselves into the Cincinnati — a secret society with anti-democratic tendencies. He was a big athletic man, of average military intelligence, who believed in a strong government with plenty of soldiers. "In the Cabinet of President Washington," says Parton, "he was the giant shadow of his diminutive friend, Hamilton. When Ham-

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ilton had spoken Knox was usually ready to say in substance: 'My own opinion, better expressed.'"

For Attorney-General Washington chose Edmund Randolph, who had chosen the Colonial side when his father, John Randolph, the King's Attorney General in Virginia, withdrew with Lord Dunmore to England. Disinherited by his father Randolph was in sore need of money, and knew that he could not live on his salary. But like Hamilton he responded to the President's summons, and took his seat at the Council Board. At the Virginia Bar Randolph had won a reputation for subtlety. In politics this turn for casuistry found too much employment. He hesitated; missed his way in refinements; and often lost sight of the wood in counting the trees. Competent where the decision lay with Judge or Jury, he was full of doubts and hesitations when the responsibility was cast upon him. In the Cabinet of Washington he would sometimes argue on one side and vote on the other. His natural inclination was to support the republican standpoint; but his political cake was only half-baked, and Jefferson summed him up in a rather bitter epigram: "Randolph," he wrote to Giles (December 31, 1795), "has generally given his principles to one party and his practice to the other, the oyster to the one, the shell to the other. Unfortunately the shell was generally the lot of his friends, the French and republicans, the oyster of their antagonists." This perhaps was a little unjust. Certainly, while Jefferson remained in the Cabinet, Randolph supported him more often than not. But Jefferson was right in his judgment of Randolph as a trimmer, who could not steer a straight course. There is an obscurity, almost a shiftiness, in some of Randolph's letters which may explain his fall and subsequent isolation.



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The principal office under the President, that of Secretary of State, which comprised not only Foreign Affairs but many other functions, was still vacant. Washington waited until he knew that Jefferson had sailed from France and then wrote to him as follows :

New York,

October 13, 1789.

Sir, In the selection of characters to fill the important offices of the Government, in the United States, I was naturally led to contemplate the talents and dispositions which I knew you to possess and entertain for the service of your country ; and without being able to consult your inclination, or to derive any knowledge of your intention from your letters, either to myself or to any other of your friends, I was determined, as well by motives of private regard, as a conviction of public propriety, to nominate you for the Department of State, which, under its present organization, involved many of the most interesting objects of the Executive authority. But grateful as your acceptance of this commission would be to me, I am, at the same time, desirous to accommodate your wishes, and I have therefore, forborne to nominate your successor at the Court of Versailles, until I should be informed of your determination. . . .

. . . Unwilling, as I am, to interfere in the direction of your choice of assistants, I shall only take the liberty of observing to you, that from warm recommendations which I have received on behalf of Roger Alden, Esq., Assistant Secretary to the late Congress, I have placed all the papers thereunto belonging under his care. Those papers which more properly appertain to the office of Foreign Affairs, are under the superintendence of Mr. Jay, who has been so obliging as to continue his good offices, and they are in the immediate charge of Mr. Remsen.

With sentiments of the greatest esteem and regard,

I have the honour to be, sir

Your most obedient servant,

George Washington.

The Honourable Thomas Jefferson.

On landing at Norfolk on November 23, Jefferson read in a news sheet that the President intended to appoint

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him Secretary of State. But it was some time before he received the letter, with another (of November 30) enclosing the Commission. From Norfolk Jefferson drove with his two daughters by slow stages to Richmond, where Patrick Henry and a committee of the Virginia Assembly presented an Address of Welcome. The rest of the story may be told in Jefferson's own words:—

“On my way home, I passed some days at Eppington, in Chesterfield, the residence of my friend and connection, Mr. Eppes;<sup>1</sup> and while there, I received a letter from President General Washington by express covering an appointment to be Secretary of State. I received it with real regret. My wish had been to return to Paris, where I had left my household establishment, and to see the end of the Revolution, which I then thought would be certainly and happily closed in less than a year. I then meant to return home, to withdraw from political life, into which I had been impressed by the circumstances of the times, to sink into the bosom of my family and friends, and devote myself to studies more congenial to my mind. In my answer of December 15th, I expressed these dispositions candidly to the President, and my preference of a return to Paris; but assured him that if it was believed I could be more useful in the administration of the government, I would sacrifice my own inclinations without hesitation, and repair to that destination; this I left to his decision. I arrived at Monticello on the 23rd of December, where I received a second letter from the President, expressing his continued wish that I should take my station there, but leaving me still at liberty to continue in my former office, if I could not reconcile myself to that now proposed. This silenced my reluctance, and I accepted the new appointment.”

In his letter of December 15 to President Washington, Jefferson wrote, after explaining his reasons for hesitation: “But it is not for an individual to choose

<sup>1</sup> Francis Eppes who married Jefferson's sister-in-law Elizabeth Wayles. The Eppington garden and orchards were celebrated for their fine flowers and fruit. Jefferson used to describe Eppes as “the first horticulturist in America.” In October, 1797, Maria Jefferson married her cousin John Wayles Eppes and took up her abode at hospitable Eppington.

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his post. You are to marshal us as may best be for the public good; and it is only in the case of its being indifferent to you that I would avail myself of the option you have so kindly offered in your letter."

Great was the joy at Monticello, where he arrived on December 23. The scene was afterwards described by Martha, then a girl of seventeen:—

"There were no stages in those days. We were indebted to the kindness of our friends for horses; and visiting all on the way homeward, and spending more or less time with them all in turn, we reached Monticello on the 23rd of December. The negroes discovered the approach of the carriage as soon as it reached Shadwell, and such a scene I never witnessed in my life. They collected in crowds around it, and almost drew it up the mountain by hand. When the door of the carriage was opened, they received him in their arms and bore him to the house, crowding around and kissing his hands and feet—some blubbering and crying—others laughing."

Jefferson lingered at Monticello through January and February, 1790. He was more popular than ever in his native State. A committee of his old Albemarle constituents came with an address of congratulation. They dwelt on his strong attachment to the rights of mankind and to the institutions best calculated to preserve them. This struck a deep chord in Jefferson, and he responded with a fine declaration of his faith and hope in democracy:—

"We have been fellow-labourers and fellow-sufferers; and Heaven has rewarded us with a happy issue from our struggles. It rests now with ourselves alone to enjoy in peace and concord the blessings of self-government, so long denied to mankind; to show by example the sufficiency of human reason for the care of human affairs; and that the will of the majority—the natural law of every society—is the only sure guardian of the rights of man. Perhaps even this may sometimes err; but its errors are honest, solitary, and short-lived. Let us then, my dear friends, forever bow down to the general reason of the society.

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We are safe with that, even in its deviations, for it soon returns again to the right way."

On February 23 at Monticello Martha Jefferson was married to her second cousin, Thomas Mann Randolph, by Maury, an Episcopal clergyman, son of Jefferson's old schoolmaster. Randolph was a typical Virginian aristocrat — brave, adventurous, sentimental, quick-tempered, prodigal, impetuous, public-spirited. From 1818 to 1821 he was Governor of Virginia. Towards the end of Jefferson's life when bad times came for Virginia's farmers, Randolph lost his money and fell into deep dejection. But his eldest son Thomas Jefferson Randolph came nobly to the rescue and saved Monticello during his grandfather's lifetime.

It was now high time for the Minister to leave for New York, where the new State department was in urgent need of a chief. He went round by Richmond, and thence to Alexandria, where he rested a day. A heavy snow had fallen, and he found the roads "so bad that we could never go more than three miles an hour, sometimes not more than two, and in the night but one." At Philadelphia he had a last talk with Benjamin Franklin. Arrived at New York, he says, "my first object was to look out for a house in the Broadway, if possible, as being the centre of my business. Finding none there vacant for the present, I have taken a small one in Maiden Lane, which may give me time to look about me."<sup>1</sup> Much business had been put by for his arrival and he was overwhelmed with official work, both foreign and domestic.

As Postmaster General — an office soon to be detached from the overloaded Secretaryship of State — he prepared a scheme for accelerating the mail service from fifty to a

<sup>1</sup> Letter to T. M. Randolph, March 28, 1790, from New York.

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hundred miles a day. As Commissioner of Patents he found congenial work in examining the claims of discoverers, real and pretended. One of the latter, Isaacs by name, wanted a patent for converting sea water into fresh. Jefferson invited him to show his skill on salt water before Rittenhouse and other members of the Philosophical Society, when the process proved to be nothing more than distillation. Another problem which came before him was the establishment of a mint. We have seen how he had been responsible for the establishment of the dollar currency; but as yet there was no public mint, and the question whether money should be coined at home or abroad was referred to him by the House of Representatives. Coinage, he replied, is an attribute of sovereignty, and to transfer its exercise to another country would be to submit to another sovereign. Accordingly preparations were made for establishing a mint at Philadelphia, the temporary capital. Foreign workmen were imported, and 150 tons of copper were ordered from Europe, to be converted into cents and half cents. The first coins, half dimes, were struck in October, 1792; but the silver and gold coinage of the United States never circulated much during Jefferson's lifetime. A report of a House committee in 1823 stated that most of the coin in the United States consisted of French silver pieces, which were then full legal tender. During the debates of 1834, Senator Benton, the leading champion of a sound currency, paid tribute "to the great apostle of American liberty" (Jefferson) for the wise, practical idea that the value of gold is a commercial question to be settled by its value in other countries. This remark he had seen in the works of that great man and had treasured it up as teaching the plain and ready way to establish the true ratio between

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gold and silver.<sup>1</sup> Jefferson and Hamilton agreed that both silver and gold coins should be in circulation, and that the ratio between them should conform as nearly as possible to the commercial ratio, then about fifteen to one. It would seem therefore that Jefferson was a bi-metallist, as well as a hard-money man. It was only a short time before his death that Great Britain definitely adopted a gold standard.

Another important branch of Jefferson's official work related to foreign commerce. It was not easy to decide on the policy which should be pursued towards Great Britain and France, and their possessions in the West Indies. Both countries endeavoured by discriminating duties and regulations to monopolise their Colonial trade. To provide a basis for cabinet discussion Jefferson in December, 1791, laid before the President an elaborate table, on which he had bestowed a prodigious amount of work, showing the extent and value of American commerce with France and England, and the various duties and prohibitions imposed in both countries on American exports. Though the French tariff was more favourable, American exports to England were five times greater than to France, and American imports nine times greater from England than from France. Commerce with the French colonies in the West Indies however was larger than with the British, and it employed 97,000 tons of American shipping, whereas American ships were prohibited altogether from the carrying trade with the British West Indies. The principal American exports to Europe were tobacco, grain, rice, indigo, wood, salted meat and fish, whale oil, tar, and turpentine. Be-

<sup>1</sup> See Benton's *Thirty Years View*, p. 443, and Hepburn's *History of Currency in the United States*, Chapters V, VI, and VII. Hamilton's report on Mint and Coinage (January, 1791) was submitted to and approved by Jefferson.

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sides these there were exported to the West Indies horses, mules, cattle, and maize. The most surprising thing in this table is the absence of cotton. Ten years later, as Tucker remarks, it was already the most valuable of American exports, and thirty years later was worth all the rest put together. The differences which developed between Hamilton and Jefferson in commercial diplomacy were partly due to their very different conceptions of fiscal policy. Hamilton acknowledged the economic superiority of free trade, but advocated the protection of native industries on nationalist grounds. Jefferson was no lover of tariffs or of State interference with industry and shipping. A disciple of Adam Smith and of the French Physiocrats, he believed in a natural exchange of products, and an unimpeded commerce between all nations. There were two methods, he wrote, of dealing with foreign restrictions on American commerce and shipping — the first by friendly reciprocity, the second by retaliation. There could be no doubt that the first was the better.

“Instead of embarrassing commerce under piles of regulating laws, duties and prohibitions, could it be relieved from all its shackles in all parts of the world, could every country be employed in producing that which nature has best fitted it to produce, and each be free to exchange with others mutual surpluses for mutual wants, the greatest mass possible would then be produced of those things which contribute to human life and human happiness; the numbers of mankind would be increased, and their condition bettered.”

But he had not advanced to the full free trade position that the right way to meet foreign tariffs is by admitting all commodities free, thus reducing cost of living and production at home and enabling the home producer to defeat taxed competitors in neutral markets.

If favour was to be shown, Jefferson preferred France to

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England, whereas Hamilton preferred England to France. These differences of outlook on foreign and commercial policy came to a head in Jefferson's last year of office, when the British Monarchy joined the autocrats of Austria and Prussia in their war on French republicanism.

No account of Jefferson's work as departmental chief in Washington's Cabinet would be true to life, if it left out Monticello, the Cynosure of his eyes, the object round which his favourite thoughts and dearest affections revolved. With all its interests and attractions office was for him a sort of penal servitude. It meant exile from Virginia, separation from home. From the day when he took up his work in New York to the day when he retired from the Presidency of the United States two magnets of almost equal power drew him in opposite directions. Sometimes public interests or the obligations of party prevailed; sometimes the call of home was irresistible. To him Monticello meant even more than Mount Vernon to Washington. Both loved the life of a country gentleman. But to Jefferson Monticello meant not only the delights of estate management but also the joys of reading and reflection, of architecture, gardening, botany, scientific agriculture, mechanics, meteorology, and many other pleasures which were almost precluded by the drudgery of office. If railways or motor cars had been invented, and the journey from Charlottesville to Washington, Philadelphia, or New York had been shortened from six, eight, or ten days to as many hours, office would not have meant exile. As it was the Secretary of State could only revisit home once a year in the autumn.

In Philadelphia, to which the seat of government was removed after the summer session of 1790, he was happier than in New York. The society was more congenial. In



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the winter, after a month at Monticello, he established himself in a comfortable house on the outskirts of the city, with a good stable of horses. There he remained till May, when oppressed by overwork and headaches he sought relief in a month's tour with Madison through New York to Lakes George and Champlain. A few extracts from letters to his two daughters, Martha Randolph and Maria Jefferson, will tell us something of this journey and more of his character and feelings than many pages of comment. The correspondence on Jefferson's side begins with letters from New York in April, 1790. Martha Randolph had begun married life at Richmond. Jefferson's wish (soon to be gratified) was that they should take a farm near Monticello. For him life is 'triste enough.' "Having had yourself and dear Poll [Maria] to live with me so long . . . and cheer me in the intervals of business I feel heavily the separation from you." Here (April 11) are a string of questions to Maria:—

"Where are you, my dear Maria? how do you do? how are you occupied? Write me a letter by the first post, and answer me all those questions. Tell me whether you see the sun rise every day? how many pages a day you read in Don Quixote? how far you are advanced in him? whether you repeat a grammar lesson every day? what else you read? how many hours a day you sew? whether you have an opportunity of continuing your music? whether you know how to make a pudding yet, to cut out a beefsteak, to sow spinach? or to set a hen?"

\* By the autumn Martha and her husband were at Monticello, and Jefferson's first letters from Philadelphia are full of careful instructions to ensure a regular correspondence, and of complaints when letters fail to arrive:—

Philadelphia, Dec. 7, 1790

To Maria Jefferson,

"This week I write to you, and if you answer my letter as soon as your receive it, and send it to Colonel Bell at Charlottesville, I shall

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receive it the day before I write to you again — that will be three weeks hence; and this I shall expect you to do always, so that by the correspondence of Mr. Randolph, your sister, and yourself, I may hear from home once a week. . . . How do you all do? Tell me that in your letter, also what is going forward with you, how you employ yourself, what weather you have had. We have already had two or three snows here. The workmen are so slow in finishing the house I have rented here, that I know not when I shall have it ready, except one room which they promise me this week, and which will be my bedroom study, dining-room, and parlor.”

Philadelphia, Dec. 23, 1790

To Martha Jefferson Randolph,

“This is a scolding letter for you all. I have not received a scrip of a pen from home since I left it. I think it is so easy for you to write me one letter every week, which will be but once in the three weeks for each of you, when I write one every week, who have not one moment’s repose from business, from the first to the last moment of the week. Perhaps you think you have nothing to say to me. It is a great deal to say you are all well . . . besides, that there is not a sprig of grass that shoots uninteresting to me; nor any thing that moves from yourself down to Bergère or Grizzle.”<sup>1</sup>

Philadelphia, Feb. 9th, 1791

To Martha Jefferson Randolph,

“Your last two letters are those which have given me the greatest pleasure of any that I have ever received from you. The one announced that you were become a notable housewife; the other, a mother. This last is undoubtedly the keystone of the arch of matrimonial happiness, as the first is its daily aliment. Accept my sincere congratulations for yourself and Mr. Randolph.”

Philadelphia, March 9th, 1791

To Maria Jefferson,

“I am happy to have at length a letter of yours to answer; for that which you wrote to me Feb. 13th came to hand Feb. 28th. I hope our correspondence will now be more regular, that you will be no more lazy, and I no more in the pouts on that account. On the 27th of February I saw blackbirds and robin redbreasts, and on the 7th of

<sup>1</sup> Two shepherd dogs they had brought from France.

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this month I heard frogs for the first time this year. Have you noted the first appearance of these things at Monticello? I hope you have, and will continue to note every appearance, animal and vegetable, which indicates the approach of spring, and will communicate them to me. By these means we shall be able to compare the climates of Philadelphia and Monticello. Tell me when you shall have peas, etc. up; when everything comes to table; when you shall have the first chickens hatched; when every kind of tree blossoms, or puts forth leaves; when each kind of flower blooms. Kiss your sister and niece for me."

To the same, March 31st

"I wrote you in my last that the frogs had begun their songs on the 7th; since that the bluebirds saluted us on the 17th; the weeping willows began to leaf on the 18th; the lilac and the gooseberry on the 25th, and the golden willow on the 26th. I enclose for your sister three kinds of flowering beans, very beautiful and very rare. She must plant and nourish them with her own hand this year in order to save enough seeds for herself and me. Tell Mr. Randolph I have sold my tobacco for five dollars per c., and the rise between this and September."

Philadelphia, April 17th, 1791

To Martha Jefferson Randolph,

"Mrs. Trist has observed that there is a kind of veil lately introduced here, and much approved. It fastens over the brim of the hat, and then draws round the neck as close or open as you please. I desire a couple to be made to go with the calash and other things. . . . I shall not be able to see you till September, by which time the young grand-daughter will begin to look bold and knowing."

On April 24 Jefferson tells Maria that she has failed him as a botanical and zoological correspondent; but he perseveres with his notes on spring in Philadelphia: "April 5. Apricots in bloom. Cherry leafing. April 9. Peach in blossom. Apple leafing," etc. In this letter he enclosed the two veils with minute instructions for wearing them.

Young Eppes, who was to be Maria's husband, had come to Philadelphia College to take a course which

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Jefferson was prescribing. On May 8 Jefferson wrote to Maria from Philadelphia : —

Your letter of April 18th came to hand on the 30th; that of May 1st, I received last night. By the stage which carries this letter I send you twelve yards of striped nankeen of the pattern inclosed. It is addressed to the care of Mr. Brown, Merchant, in Richmond, and will arrive there with this letter. There are no stuffs here of the kind you sent. April 30th the lilac blossomed. May 4th the gelder-rose, dogwood, redbud, azalea were in blossom. We have still pretty constant fires here. I shall answer Mr. Randolph's letter a week hence. It will be the last I shall write to Monticello for some weeks, because about this day sennight I set out to join Mr. Madison at New York, from whence we shall go up to Albany and Lake George, then cross over to Bennington, and so through Vermont to the Connecticut River, down Connecticut River by Hartford to New Haven, then to New York and Philadelphia. Take a map and trace this route. I expect to be back in Philadelphia about the middle of June. I am glad you are to learn to ride, but hope that your horse is very gentle, and that you will never be venturesome. A lady should never ride a horse which she might not safely ride without a bridle. I long to be with you all. Kiss the little one every morning for me, and learn her to run about before I come. Adieu, my dear.

Our last extract shall be from a letter to Martha, dated Lake Champlain, May 31, 1791 : —

I wrote to Maria yesterday while sailing on Lake George, and the same kind of leisure is afforded me to-day to write to you. Lake George is, without comparison, the most beautiful water I ever saw; formed by a contour of mountains into a basin thirty-five miles long, and from two to four miles broad, finely interspersed with islands, its water limpid as crystal, and the mountain sides covered with rich groves of thuja, silver fir, white pine, aspen and paper birch down to the water edge, here and there precipices of rock to checker the scene and save it from monotony. An abundance of speckled trout, salmon trout, bass, and other fish with which it is stored, have added to our other amusements the sport of taking them. Lake Champlain, though much larger, is a far less pleasant water. It is muddy, turbulent, and yields little game. After penetrating into it about twenty-five miles we have been obliged by a head wind and high sea to return, having spent a day and a half

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in sailing on it. We shall take our route again through Lake George, pass through Vermont, down Connecticut River, and through Long Island to New York and Philadelphia. Our journey hitherto has been prosperous and pleasant, except as to the weather, which has been as sultry hot through the whole as could be found in Carolina or Georgia. I suspect, indeed, that the heats of northern climates may be more powerful than those of southern ones in proportion as they are shorter. Perhaps vegetation requires this. There is as much fever and ague, too, and other bilious complaints, on Lake Champlain as on the swamps of Carolina. Strawberries here are in the blossom or just formed. With you I suppose the season is over. On the whole, I find nothing anywhere else, in point of climate, which Virginia need envy to any part of the world. Here they are locked up in ice and snow for six months. Spring and autumn, which make a paradise of our country, are rigorous winter with them. And a tropical summer breaks on them all at once. When we consider how much climate contributes to the happiness of our condition, by the fine sensations it excites, and the productions it is the parent of, we have reason to value highly the accident of birth in such a one as that of Virginia.

From this distance I can have little domestic to write to you about. I must always repeat how much I love you. Kiss the little Anne for me. I hope she grows lustily, enjoys good health, and will make us all, and long, happy as the centre of our common love.

Adieu, my dear,

Yours affectionately

Th. Jefferson

At the end of July he asks whether 'two sets of ivory chessmen,' which Petit his French butler was sure he had packed, were safely arrived at Monticello. One wonders if Jefferson was fond of the game. At the beginning of September he rode back to Monticello with Madison and stayed there for a month. On October 12 he started back to Philadelphia, stopping at Mount Vernon to confer with the President. This time he took Maria with him. Randall tells us that his establishment at Philadelphia from this time onwards consisted of a steward, Maria's maid,

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four or five male servants, and five horses. He prepared to remove home in the spring of 1793, but was persuaded, as we shall see, by Washington's urgent solicitations to postpone his retirement from office until the end of the year.

## CHAPTER II

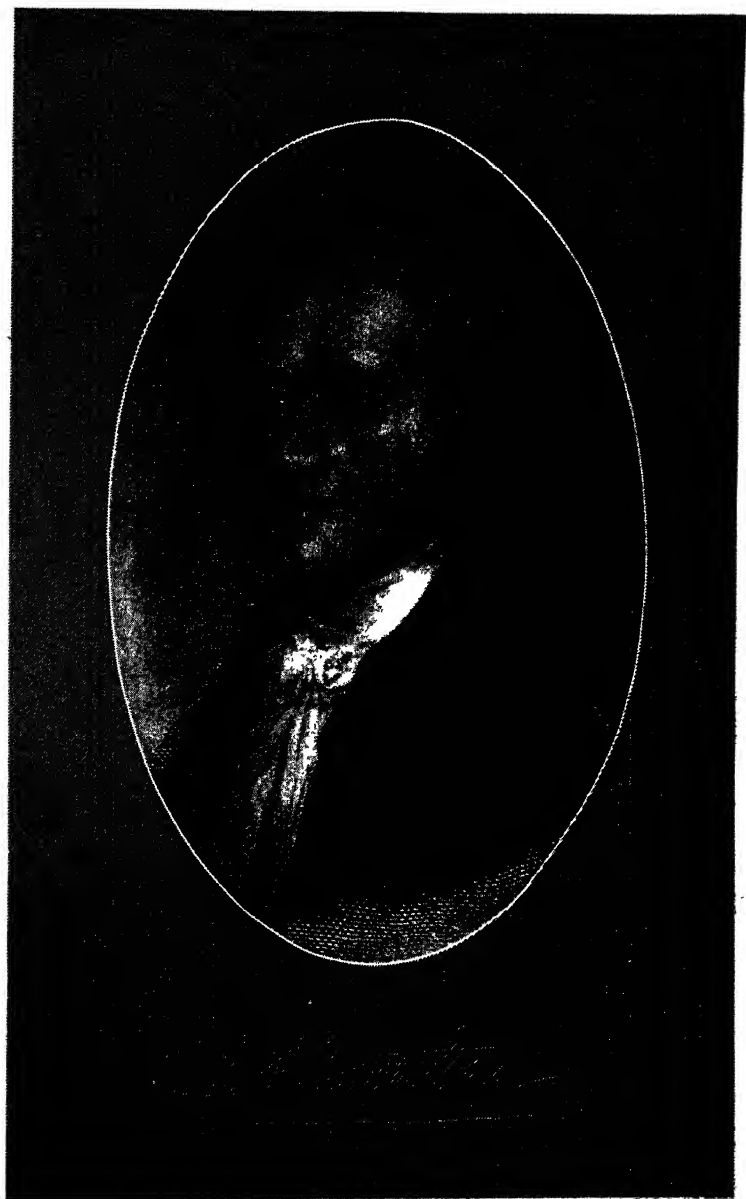
### THE QUARREL WITH ALEXANDER HAMILTON

"Quis justius induit arma,  
Scire nefas."

— LUCAN

THE political duel between Hamilton and Jefferson, perhaps the most important in its consequences of any in American history, and comparable in character and intensity with that between Fox and Pitt, arose from an antagonism of political principles which spread rapidly over the whole field of politics and helped to create two opposing systems and parties.

When Jefferson by prodigious industry had disposed of the arrears of work, and began to take stock of the political situation, he found to his disgust and amazement that the society of New York — now a town of over 30,000 inhabitants — was pro-British and anti-French, with a strong bias towards hereditary and even monarchical institutions. It was a commercial community, with a moneyed interest naturally prone to snobbery and servile to any government which could gratify its social aspirations and help it to get rich quickly. In this society Alexander Hamilton shone — vivacious, eloquent, pushful, Napoleonic in aims and methods, with French morals and English politics. The support of rich speculators seemed essential to his schemes for reviving public credit; their love of titles confirmed his political theories; and he set



Painted by Trumbull





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to work with immense ardour and industry to capture Congress by associating the moneyed interests with the Federalist party in support of the Treasury. At the same time he seized every opportunity of strengthening the central government and enlarging its powers at the expense of state rights.

With equal determination Jefferson and Madison, when they saw this policy developing, laboured to sustain the republican cause by appealing to the interests of the country people against the commercial and stock-jobbing classes and to the instincts of local or state patriotism against the Nationalists.

From this conflict American parties took their rise, and soon to the dismay of Washington, party spirit began to rage within as well as without his Cabinet. His efforts to compose differences and to steer a middle course are worthy of all admiration; and although his ideal of a non-party coalition government was bound to be impracticable in the long run, as revolutionary passions swelled and surged across the Atlantic, yet his two first administrations laid a solid foundation for the safety and permanence of the new Republic.

Jefferson's Memoir ends with his acceptance of office; but fortunately he left the 'Ana' or notes,<sup>1</sup> which explain many passages in his official life, as Secretary, Vice-President, and President, including the beginning of the conflict with Hamilton. These jottings were begun towards the end of 1791. They have been described as 'unchivalrous' and even malevolent, because they contain a certain small amount of gossip about the political opinions and obiter dicta of Hamilton and the Federalists. The modern reader, accustomed to diaries and reminiscences

<sup>1</sup> Southey described Boswell's *Life of Johnson* as 'the Ana of all Anas.'

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teeming with uncharitable indiscretions, will be surprised to find how trivial are Jefferson's sins, if sins they can be called. A few pages of Pepys' diary contain more gossip than the whole of Jefferson's *Anas*. Far from condemning the *Anas* we wish that Jefferson and his contemporaries had left us not less but more of social and political table talk. A Pepys or a Greville, who could have reported as a diner out what the partisans of Jefferson, or John Adams, or Hamilton, were saying between 1790 and 1800 would have lent life and colour to the early history of American Parties. Still the fact remains that Jefferson's enemies — whose hostility takes the peculiar form of editing his works or writing his life — always lift up their hands in holy horror at the depravity of the *Anas* without exhibiting any more substantial proof than their own showers of abusive epithets. Let us look then at Jefferson's prefatory explanation, written in 1818, to the "three volumes bound in marbled paper" which contained (1) copies of his official opinions given in writing to President Washington while he was Secretary of State and (2) his memoranda of conversations with Washington and others, and notes on passing transactions.

At first as Secretary of State he made no notes. After a while he saw the importance of so doing. "At this day, after the lapse of twenty years or more from their dates, I have given to the whole a calm revisal, when the passions of the time are passed away." Some he suppressed as incorrect, or doubtful, or merely personal. "I should perhaps have thought the rest not worth preserving but for their testimony against the only history of that period [John Marshall's *Life of Washington*] which pretends to have been compiled from authentic and unpublished documents." Marshall was a Federalist politician, who hated

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the French revolution, and showed his detestation of the republican party by representing their principles as hypocrisies, or extravagances, and their leaders as intriguers or impostors. It is rather a dull book; but it has an air of historical veracity which none knew better to impart than the crafty Chief Justice. Jefferson's answer in his *Ana* and correspondence is not a counter accusation of hypocrisy against his Federalist opponents but an endeavour to prove that the contests of 1791 to 1800 "were contests of principle between the advocates of republican and those of kingly government; and that, had not the former made the efforts they did, our government would have been even at this early day [1818] a very different thing from what the successful issue of those efforts have made it."

The charges that Jefferson's *Ana* contain mean and cowardly attacks on dead men, etc. will not hold water. His complaints against Hamilton are not personal.<sup>1</sup> He does not say that his private morals were so bad that he ought not to have been trusted with office. If he had taken that line, a modern biographer might have cited the respectable authority of the Unionist Party in Britain, which employed Parnell's misconduct with a woman to upset Home Rule. Jefferson's grounds of opposition to the Secretary of the Treasury — to the man and his measures — were that Hamilton despised democracy, disliked the republican form of government, was a monarchist in theory, and sought by administrative measures to subvert the constitution, or at least to convert it gradually into

<sup>1</sup> In the *Anas* Jefferson described Hamilton as "of acute understanding, disinterested, honest and honorable in all private transactions, amiable in society, and duly valuing virtue in private life, yet so bewitched and perverted by the British example as to be under thorough conviction that corruption was essential to the government of a nation."

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something like that of Great Britain under George the Third. He undoubtedly came to believe, after a couple of years in Washington's Cabinet, that these were Hamilton's objectives, and that his financial measures aimed at accumulating new powers in the hands of the Central Government.) Not the least of the objections felt by Jefferson and Madison to Hamilton's financial policy was that it involved bribery of the legislature — that the votes by which it was in great part carried were recorded by 'a corrupt squadron' of Representatives and Senators interested in public debt and bank scrip, who ought never to have been allowed to vote at all. So far from these Jeffersonian objections to Hamiltonian politics and finance having been quietly noted at the time and then prepared for posthumous publication, they were fully and freely set forth by the Secretary of State, not only in conversations with Washington recorded in the *Anas*, but in contemporary letters to Washington and others. There was no concealment at the time of Jefferson's opposition to Hamilton's system. Indeed Washington's chief concern was that their antagonism was so vehement and that their partisans in the press and in Congress were so outspoken, so bitter and so passionate. Hamilton's anonymous attacks on Jefferson, as we shall see, abound in the most violent personal invective. Jefferson is 'the intriguing incendiary,' or 'the concealed voluptuary,' or the promoter of national disunion and public disorder. The odd thing is that after writing reams against Jefferson in the public newspapers Hamilton was willing, early in 1793, to coalesce with Jefferson.<sup>1</sup> The President had expressed his earnest wish that Jefferson and Hamilton should "coalesce in the measures of the Government and said that

<sup>1</sup> See Jefferson's interview with the President, February, 1793.

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Hamilton had expressed his readiness to do so." Jefferson replied: "as to a coalition with Mr. Hamilton, if by that was meant that either was to sacrifice his general system to the other, it was impossible. We had both no doubt formed our conclusions after the most mature consideration; and principles conscientiously adopted could not be given up on either side."

To understand the quarrel between Hamilton and Jefferson we must retrace our steps. Jefferson managed the foreign policy of the United States from the beginning of 1790 to the end of 1793. Hamilton managed its financial policy from the autumn of 1789 to the beginning of 1795. For the first two years their relations were amicable. They had never quarrelled. They were at first good colleagues. Jefferson was an admirer of the *Federalist*, in which Hamilton, Madison, and Jay had recommended with so much skill the Constitution adopted by the Convention. In a letter to Hamilton of March, 1791, he concludes 'with sentiments of the most perfect respect and esteem,' and another of February, 1792, endorsing Hamilton's report on the mint winds up 'respectfully and affectionately.' This seems to prove that differences in opinion had up to that time not interfered with personal friendship. But how real and fundamental these differences were, is apparent from the record of a dinner at Jefferson's house in April, 1791. John Adams and Alexander Hamilton were his guests. Conversation turning on the British Constitution Adams observed: "Purge that constitution of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would be the most perfect constitution ever devised by the wit of man." Hamilton paused and said: "purge it of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it

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would become an *impracticable* government: as it stands at present, with all its supposed defects, it is the most perfect government which ever existed."

The first break came between Madison and Hamilton, who had been in friendly partnership over the *Federalist*. The broad ground of principle on which Madison, then a leader in the House of Representatives, came to be a critic instead of a supporter of Hamilton, was explained by Madison in his old age to his friend, Nicholas P. Trist: "I deserted Colonel Hamilton, or rather Colonel Hamilton deserted me—in a word, the divergence between us took place—from his wishing to *administration*, or rather to administer the Government, into that he thought it ought to be; while, on my part, I endeavoured to make it conform to the Constitution as understood by the Convention that produced and recommended it, and particularly by the State conventions that *adopted* it."<sup>1</sup> Madison meant that Hamilton's policy at the Treasury went far beyond financial organisation or the restoring of public credit, and that he was trying to enlarge the scope and powers of the Central Government. It was some time before Jefferson's suspicions were aroused. He liked Hamilton and admired his talents, his vigour, and his efficiency in business. But in the late autumn of 1790 he opposed Hamilton's plan for a National Bank as unconstitutional, and Hamilton brooded over this, though there was nothing in Jefferson's opinion which should have given any personal offence.

In a conversation with Washington about the post office on February 28, 1792, Jefferson advised the President to make it quite independent of the Treasury, because "the

<sup>1</sup> See Nicholas P. Trist's Memoranda quoted in Appendix IX of Randall's Jefferson, and inaccurately by Parton, Chapter 43.

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department of the Treasury possessed already such an influence as to swallow up the whole executive powers." He even expressed a fear that future Presidents — lacking Washington's strength of character and prestige — would not be able to make head against the Treasury, unless things were placed on a safe footing. A day or two later, after breakfasting with Washington, Jefferson enlarged upon this theme. A system, he said, had been devised at the Treasury, and a series of laws passed, under which the states were being deluged with paper money instead of gold and silver; and citizens were withdrawing from commerce and useful industry to gamble in scrip. The poison had been injected into the veins of government; and the constitution was being changed into a very different thing from what the people thought they had submitted to. There had now been brought forward a proposition far beyond any ever yet advanced, on the decision of which would depend, "whether we live under a limited or an unlimited government":—

"He asked me to what proposition I alluded? I answered, to that in the report on manufactures, which, under colour of giving *bounties* for the encouragement of particular manufactures, meant to establish the doctrine, that the power given by the constitution to collect taxes to provide for the *general welfare* of the United States, permitted Congress to take everything under their management which *they* should deem for the *public welfare*, and which is susceptible of the application of money; consequently that the subsequent enumeration of their powers was not the description to which resort must be had, and did not at all constitute the limits of their authority; that this was a very different question from that of the bank, which was thought an incident to an enumerated power; that, therefore, this decision was expected with great anxiety; that, indeed, I hoped the proposition would be rejected, believing there was a majority in both Houses against it, and that if it should be, it would be considered as a proof that things were returning



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to their true channel; and that, at any rate, I looked forward to the broad representation which would shortly take place, for keeping the general constitution on its true ground; and this could remove a great deal of the discontent which had shown itself.”<sup>1</sup>

Hamilton's reputation has suffered from hero worship. He is *The Conqueror* of Mrs. Atherton's romantic imagination. Mr. Oliver, one of the latest votaries, an Englishman, has thought it necessary to sacrifice victims on the altar and to decorate his idol with garlands — such as the Monroe doctrine — which he never won. That Hamilton may look the giant, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe must be pygmies; even the stature of Washington must be diminished, so that the President may appear sometimes as Hamilton's pupil, sometimes as his puppet. To improve Hamilton's appearance, the characters of his antagonists must be blackened. To sublimate him, their lives, conduct, and motives must be soiled and defiled. Their mean and petty ambitions, their paltry views of national honour, their pettifogging moralities, their low cunning, their underhand intrigues are the artistic background of Hamilton's unapproachable magnificence. His effulgent personality seems to need a background of political malefactors. That his grand designs and vaulting ambitions were rejected and defeated by the American people is one of the incomprehensible tragedies of history — and all the more so because the republican party led by Jefferson and Madison was not *wholly composed* of 'bad citizens and dishonest rascals' and of 'men who sought a profit in disunion or in the repudiation of debts,' but included a number of well-meaning innocents who were stupid

<sup>1</sup> The date on which this conversation with Washington, recorded in the *Ana*, took place is March 1, 1792. Washington had made up his mind to retire at the expiration of his first term of office, and was trying to persuade Jefferson not to retire simultaneously.

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enough to value state rights and to mistrust the growing power of the central administration.<sup>1</sup>

It would have been better if Mr. Oliver and others of the Hamiltonian sect in their essays on Hamilton and Jefferson had been willing to admit that Hamilton's opponents were also men of talent and public spirit, stubborn and unswerving in the pursuit of the policies they had embraced, and in resistance to those of which they disapproved.

The differences between the two ministers however did not become personally acute until the spring of 1792. At first they were both absorbed in the work of their respective offices and with reports to the President and to Congress. Hamilton had organized an effective department on what seemed at that time a somewhat lavish scale. Jefferson's staff consisted of four assistant clerks,<sup>2</sup> a translator, and a messenger. He had old-fashioned ideas of public thrift, and never sought to enlarge or aggrandize his office by multiplying its numbers.

During the summer of 1791 Jefferson by an accident became the central figure in a hot controversy which blazed up between the Burkians and the Painites. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, whose splendid imagery wrapped all the abuses of the old régime in a halo of sentimental chivalry and dressed up every reformer in the garb of anarchist or atheist, had appeared at the end of the year 1790. Thomas Paine, a friend of Burke and his guest only a couple of years before, was astounded at this tergiversation. For had not Burke been the champion of political liberty during the American Revolution? A few months after the appearance of the *Reflections* Paine

<sup>1</sup> See F. S. Oliver's *Hamilton*, Book III, Chapter III.

<sup>2</sup> See Jefferson to Washington, September 9, 1792.

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answered with the *Rights of Man*. "The age of chivalry is gone," cried Burke, concentrating all his indignation against the people, 'a swinish multitude' who sought relief from oppression, and all his sympathy on the Queen who refused it. "He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird," was one of Paine's retorts. When Burke wept melodious tears over the titles that had been abolished, Paine replied: "France has outgrown the babyhood of count and duke, and breeched itself in manhood." Stripped of its rhetoric and poetry, its winding metaphors and captivating phrases, Burke's argument against reform is a flimsy structure easily shattered by the plain prose and remorseless logic of his opponent. Even in England three copies of Paine sold for one of Burke. But one-half of Burke was right. He was right in his historical conception of society, right in declaring that old institutions, habits, and traditions cannot be uprooted without the risk, perhaps the certainty of disorder, right in predicting that the march of events in France (urged on, alas, by his pen) would end in frightful chaos. If Burke had recognized the wrongs suffered by the enslaved people of France, the awful iniquities of Church, nobility, and Monarchy, the philosophy of the *Reflections* might have ranked with his American tracts instead of procuring him a pension from George the Third and the royal commendation: "this is a book which every gentleman ought to read." The modern reader of these two famous pamphlets, remembering that Burke appealed to the ruling gentry of England to aid their French brethren, while Paine told a voteless multitude that they were a majority and as such entitled to rule, will easily understand why Paine's antidote, instead of converting the governing classes of England to much needed reforms at home, only added to

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the alarm and disposed them to follow Burke and to adopt the fatal policy of making war upon revolutionary opinions abroad.

When Paine was leaving Paris early in 1790, Lafayette had given him the key of the Bastille to be presented to General Washington. In the same spirit Paine, believing (as he said) that republican America was "the country from whence all reformation must originally spring," dedicated the *Rights of Man* to its first President. "I present you," he wrote, "a small treatise in defence of those principles which your exemplary virtue hath so manifestly contributed to establish," adding a prayer "that the rights of man may become as universal as your benevolence can wish, and that you may enjoy the happiness of seeing the new world regenerate the old."

An advance copy of the *Rights of Man* arrived in America at the end of April, 1791. Madison lent it to Jefferson, to be sent on to J. B. Smith, a Philadelphian merchant, whose brother was to publish the American edition. In forwarding it Jefferson remarked in his covering letter: "I am extremely pleased to find it will be reprinted here, and that something is at length to be publicly said against the political heresies which have sprung up among us. I have no doubt our citizens will rally a second time round the standard of Common Sense." Just before leaving for his tour with Madison in the North, he was thunderstruck to find that the enterprising publisher, without asking leave, had issued the *Rights of Man* with these words of approval from the Secretary of State prefixed. He saw at once what would happen; for the cap exactly fitted his old friend John Adams, the Vice President, who had scented danger to society in French republicanism and had recently given expression to doctrines of an oligarchi-

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cal if not a monarchical flavour in his *Discourses on Davila*. Jefferson at once wrote very frankly to Washington. He was sincerely mortified by the printer's indiscretion as likely to commit him with his friend the Vice President "for whom as one of the most honest and disinterested men alive I have a cordial esteem." He had also learned that 'some Anglomen' were complaining that an official sanction of Paine's principles would give offence to the British Government. "Their real fear however is that this popular and republican pamphlet, taking wonderfully, is likely at a single stroke to wipe out all the unconstitutional doctrines which their bell-wether Davila has been preaching for a twelve month."

Returning from the North Jefferson found the newspapers were seething with this controversy. A series of articles signed 'Publicola,' attributed to Adams but really written by his son J. Q. Adams, had attacked both Paine and Jefferson. Jefferson sent Adams a friendly letter of explanation saying that he had never intended or wished to appear on the public stage as an antagonist of John Adams' theories of government. On what was the best form of government they differed as friends but confined their differences to private conversation. In an equally friendly reply Adams disclaimed any wish to introduce either a monarchical or hereditary system of government into America, and challenged Jefferson to produce any passage in his writings which would bear that construction. He did not disclose the authorship of Publicola, but said: "I neither wrote nor corrected Publicola." Jefferson did not pursue the controversy, being well satisfied, as he wrote to Paine, that republicanism remained the popular creed. Publicola's attempt to show that the British Constitution was superior to the new Constitution

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of France found no favour. Another year was to pass before the excesses of French republicanism set back the current and made democratic ideas odious to a powerful section of public opinion in the United States.

Hardly had the dust of Paine and Publicola been laid when another storm burst round Jefferson's head. When the government removed to Philadelphia the four clerks of his office came with their chief; but the translator, who received the princely salary of 250 dollars a year, preferred to remain in New York. So Jefferson at last had a piece of patronage to bestow. His choice fell upon Freneau, the poet journalist, a college friend of Madison and Henry Lee at Princeton. Freneau was probably the most talented journalist in the ranks of the Republicans, and at this time Madison and Lee — who had not yet turned Federalist — hit upon him as the most likely editor for a republican weekly newspaper, which they were planning as an antidote to the Federalist press. Freneau was a good French scholar, well qualified for the task of translating the *Leyden Gazette*. But at the end of October, eight months after his appointment to this part-time work in Jefferson's office, the *National Gazette* was launched with Freneau as editor. It seems to have been more lively and, as time went on, not less scurrilous than the *United States Gazette*, edited by Hamilton's friend, John Fenno. Fenno expressed amazement in his daily *Gazette* at the turpitude of Freneau for daring to maintain the republican point of view against Hamilton. One of Fenno's favourite themes was that only awe of Washington kept the demagogues in restraint; but for him the new "shilly-shally constitution" would be worthless. Thus Freneau was led to criticise the President, and strenuous efforts were made at a later date to persuade Washington that Jefferson had

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got up the paper for this very purpose and was inspiring it. This we know to be untrue. Jefferson never wrote anonymously for Freneau or inspired his articles. Madison did write for the paper, and acknowledged that he had helped to establish it in order to counteract Fenno's advocacy of monarchical institutions, of Burke against Paine, of England against France and so on. Hamilton took Freneau's criticisms to heart, and it is clear that in the early months of 1792 he began to meditate retaliation on Jefferson as being, with Madison, "at the head of a faction decidedly hostile to me and my administration."

Meanwhile Jefferson, sick of the drudgery and contentions of office, was bent on retiring at the end of the President's first term, and wrote a long letter to Washington (May 23, 1792) which gives a very complete view of his opinions at the time. Without mentioning Hamilton by name he dwells on the evils of paper money and speculation, of the strength of the 'corrupt squadron of paper dealers' in the Legislature, of their efforts to remove all limitations on the powers of the Federal government and "to prepare the way for a change from the present republican form of government to that of a monarchy, of which the English constitution is to be the model." That this was contemplated in the Convention, he adds, "is no secret, because its partisans have made none of it." Consequently discontents and dissensions were growing among the people, and especially between North and South. He could "scarcely contemplate a more incalculable evil than the breaking of the Union into two or more parts." It was therefore of the utmost importance that Washington should remain at the head of affairs. "The confidence of the whole Union is centred on you. . . . North and South will hang together if they have you to hang on." As for

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his own office it could easily be filled. "I have therefore no motive to consult but my own inclination, which is bent irresistibly on the tranquil enjoyment of my family, my farm and my books. I should repose among them, it is true, in far greater security, if I were to know that you remained at the watch." Washington's reply was given in conversation on July 10. As to monarchy there might be *desires*, but he did not believe there were *designs*. He defended Assumption and the Excise Law, but did not touch on Corruption. Freneau's paper, he said, was exciting opposition to the government, which would tend to produce anarchy, and so lead to disunion and perhaps to monarchy. He still longed for retirement, but if he thought there was danger to the country he would conquer his longing.

By this time party spirit was flaming up; for the French Republic was fighting desperately for its existence against Austria and Prussia. On June 16, 1792, Jefferson wrote to Lafayette: "Behold you then, my dear friend, at the head of a great army establishing the liberties of your country against a foreign enemy. May heaven favour your cause and make you the channel through which it may pour its favours." Lafayette had been appointed to command the army of National Defence, and had won several successes in the vicinity of Maubeuge. But he was losing his popularity with the revolutionaries in Paris, whose violence and ferocity increased with the danger of a foreign invasion. A few days after Jefferson wrote this letter, Lafayette went to Paris hoping to bring the King and the Assembly round to his view. But he was unsuccessful and was denounced at the Jacobin club by Robespierre. Next month the Prussian and Austrian armies were moving into France; and their commander, the Duke of Bruns-



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wick, issued a proclamation ordering the people of Paris to submit without delay to their King. He threatened that, unless immediate provision were made for the liberty and safety of the King and Queen, the city of Paris would be delivered over to military execution and total overthrow, and that all who opposed the armies of Prussia and Austria would be punished as rebels. The effect of this savage proclamation and of the junction of emigré nobles with the foreign enemy might have been foreseen. "As the columns of Brunswick advanced across the northeastern frontier, Danton and the leaders of the city democracy marshalled their army of the poor and the desperate to overthrow that monarchy whose cause the invader had made his own."<sup>1</sup> Then followed a national uprising against foreigners and traitors, the assault on the Tuilleries, the proscription of moderates, the September massacres, the battle of Valmy, the proclamation of the Republic (September 21), and the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick. In August, to avoid execution, Lafayette crossed the frontier, and was incarcerated with other moderate French republicans in the Austrian fortress of Olmutz, whence he was to be set free by Napoleon in 1797. In all probability Jefferson's letter never reached him. If it had, Lafayette would have learnt about 'the stock-jobbers and king-jobbers' who had come into the Legislature and of the leaders who wanted to anglicise the American Constitution. But the people were "firm and constant in their republic purity" as the ensuing elections would show. This prediction was to be verified; for at

<sup>1</sup> See Fyffe's *History of Modern Europe*, Chapter II. This chapter will help a modern liberal to understand why even the Terror did not induce Jefferson and Madison to transfer their sympathies from the armies of republican France to those of Prussian and Austrian autocracy.

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the Congressional elections in November the Republicans gained a decided majority.

That Jefferson's sympathies with the republican cause survived the September massacres and the execution of the French King in January, 1793, need not astonish us. Lafayette and Paine, who at the risk of their own lives preached moderation to the Assembly, remained republicans in spite of republican excesses. Absolutism had appealed to the sword; if there must be war it was better that monarchy and aristocracy should go down than democracy. Neither in America nor England did the struggles of the French nation become indifferent to the friends of democracy and liberty, until republican patriotism sank under militarism, and Napoleon the Usurper quenched liberty at home in order to make himself the tyrant of Europe. When England entered the lists to support the old monarchies against the Republic, Fox and his friends opposed the war. In America Hamilton was for a neutrality friendly to England; Jefferson for a neutrality friendly to France. This was to be expected, and we cannot wonder that party passions ran high, that strong and exaggerated language was used on both sides, or that federalist and republican newspapers embittered the controversy by vituperating the rival champions.

Hamilton nursed his wrath against Jefferson until July, 1792. Then in Fenno's *Gazette of the United States* he started a campaign against Jefferson for paying Freneau with public money to oppose the measures of the government. It does not seem to have occurred to Hamilton that, if it was improper in a man who received a small fee (a pound a week) as translator of foreign periodicals for the State Department to edit a weekly review which criticised the Secretary of the Treasury, then it was doubly

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and trebly so in a Secretary of the Treasury with a salary of \$3,500 to write articles for another editor against his senior colleague, the Secretary of State!

Hamilton's method is well known in dishonest newspaper offices, but now worn rather threadbare. It is by rapid changes of pseudonym or initials to make the public suppose that a number of independent readers or publicists are supporting some particular 'stunt.' Hamilton opened the ball in July, 1792, with a letter from 'T. L.' unfolding the hideous facts (artistically faked) about Freneau's double position. Then came a series of articles by 'An American' feigning utter astonishment and horror on reading T. L.'s revelations! To Freneau's affidavit that Jefferson had nothing to do with either the establishment or the management of the paper — that he had neither influenced, nor attempted to influence it, or written a single line for it — 'American' replied that "a pensioned tool" must be expected to lie; for facts speak louder than words or even than oaths.

By way of avoiding suspicion 'American' threw in some praise of 'the Wise Constitution' of the United States, of which the real Hamilton thought so meanly. Freneau challenged his accuser to come out of the dark into the open; to throw aside disguise and disclose his name. Thereupon (August 18) 'American' dropped out of the fight. Freneau's *Gazette* then began to retaliate with counter charges against Hamilton for his advocacy of the British constitution in the convention and other later delinquencies. This brought 'Amicus' on to the stage in defence of Hamilton and his administration. He complained that the proceedings in the Convention were private and ought not to be referred to, but was able to state that "the member in question never made a proposition

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to the Convention which was not conformable to the republican theory."

A course of deception once started on is likely to lead to downright falsehood. On September 15 'Catullus' comes forward to declare that he is not the original party to the charges against Jefferson, but is willing to be responsible for the allegations he makes. These consist of 'American's' charges refurbished, with a few new complaints and insinuations thrown in.

Of course Hamilton could not have signed these attacks on Jefferson without relinquishing office. His Protean changes of pseudonym can only have been adopted to throw critics off the scent, or to make the public suppose that a number of independent persons were scandalised by Jefferson's villainy. The series — which appears in Alexander Hamilton's Works<sup>1</sup> — is concluded by Metellus and "A Plain Honest Man." Mr. F. S. Oliver in his *Life of Hamilton* draws too heavily on our credulity when he tells us that Hamilton only adopted such signatures because 'the fashion of the times' preferred them. As his own salary was so small (only fourteen times that with which Jefferson hired Freneau to criticise Hamilton!) we cannot blame Hamilton for enlarging it by journalism. But this particular series of articles could not have been written under his own name unless he was ready to resign. As it was, the authorship leaked out, and it would seem

<sup>1</sup> Edited by H. C. Lodge, vol. VI, pp. 313 to 387, under the heading 'The Jefferson Controversy.' F. S. Oliver declares that Hamilton's accusations were proved up to the hilt, that poor Jefferson was convicted of 'disloyalty, fatuity, ignorance, and hypocrisy' and that the method adopted by Hamilton was 'certainly excusable' for an American Minister who is debarred from speaking in Congress. Anyhow 'Hamilton's popularity rose,' and 'the Federalists were elected.' Mr. Oliver marvels that Jefferson survived these exposures! See F. S. Oliver's *Life of Hamilton*, Book IV, Chapter III.

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that they did more harm to the Secretary of the Treasury than to the Secretary of State.

While Hamilton was thus employed, Jefferson was at Monticello. At the end of August Washington wrote to them both pleading for mutual forbearance and charity. Differences of speculative opinion within the Cabinet should not be pressed when "we are encompassed on all sides with avowed enemies." So reasoned the President, much as the Duke of Wellington argued, when he told Tory dissentients from Sir Robert Peel's policy that the Queen's Government must be carried on.

Jefferson's reply (September 9 from Monticello) goes very thoroughly into his differences with Hamilton. He had never intrigued against his measures with members of the legislature. But "that I have utterly in my private conversations disapproved of the system of the Secretary of the Treasury I acknowledge and avow." Nor was this a merely speculative difference; for Hamilton's system flowed from principles adverse to liberty, and was calculated to demolish the Republic by making it profitable for members of the legislature to support his policy. Moreover in his Report on Manufactures — still to be acted on — it was assumed that the federal government might exercise and draw from the States all powers necessary for the general welfare. To Hamilton's complaint that he was being thwarted by Jefferson, Jefferson replied that Hamilton had interfered with foreign affairs, whereas he had not interfered with those of the Treasury.

Thus Jefferson begs leave of the President to add some notice of Hamilton's onslaughts in Fenno's *Gazette* — for neither the style, matter, nor venom of the pieces alluded to could leave a doubt of their author — and proceeds to

## The Quarrel with Alexander Hamilton

show that 'An American's' three principal charges were all false:—

1. of writing letters from France to oppose the present constitution;
2. of being opposed to payment of the public debt;
3. of setting up a paper to slander the Government.

The falsity of the first charge would appear from a perusal of the few letters he wrote from France on the subject, which he proposed to submit to Washington. His principal objection to the Constitution had been that it wanted a Bill of Rights, Hamilton's that it wanted a King and House of Lords. "The sense of America has approved my objection and added the Bill of Rights, not the king and lords."

The second charge was equally untrue:—

"My whole correspondence while in France, and every letter and act on the subject since my return, show that no man is more ardently intent to see the public debt soon and sacredly paid off than I am. This exactly marks the difference between Colonel Hamilton's views and mine that I would wish the debt paid off to-morrow; he wishes it never to be paid but always to be a thing wherewith to corrupt and manage the legislature."

Here one may pause to observe that the severity of this letter and its biting sarcasms are explicable, if not justifiable, as against a colleague who had levelled malicious and untruthful attacks upon him in the public press.

Coming to the third count Jefferson begins:—

"I have never inquired what number of sons, relatives and friends of Senators, Representatives, printers or other useful partisans Colonel Hamilton has provided for amongst the hundred clerks of his Department, the thousand excisemen at his nod and spread over the Union; nor could ever have imagined that the man who has the shuffling of millions backwards and forwards from paper into money and money into paper, from Europe to America and from America to Europe, the

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dealing out of treasury secrets among his friends in what time and measure he pleases, and who never slips an occasion of making friends with his means, that such an one I say would have brought forward a charge against me for having appointed the poet Freneau translating clerk to my office with a salary of 250 dollars a year."

After explaining precisely what he did when the office became vacant Jefferson adds that, when Freneau's paper was started, he had looked forward to the chastisement of aristocratic and monarchical writers and not to criticisms of the government. But he did not think there was any harm in the Government having a critic in Freneau's paper as well as a flatterer in Fenno's.

But was not the dignity and even the decency of government committed when one of its principal ministers enlisted himself as an anonymous writer or paragraphist? It is a pity that the sentences which follow are not even at this day better understood: "No government ought to be without censors, and where the press is free none ever will. If virtuous, it need not fear the fair operation of attack and defence. Nature has given to man no other means of sifting out the truth either in religion, laws, or politics."

In a concluding paragraph Jefferson rejoiced that Washington had agreed to be nominated for a second term; but his own resolution to retire was unchanged, and he looked forward to it "with the longing of a wave worn mariner who has at length the land in view." Until that day arrived he would not disturb the government by newspaper controversy; but on becoming again a private citizen "if my own justification, or the interests of the republic shall require it, I reserve to myself the right of then appealing to my country, subscribing my name to whatever I write, and using with freedom and truth the

## The Quarrel with Alexander Hamilton

facts and names necessary to place the cause in its just form before that tribunal."

Hamilton's reply to the President expressed an "anxious wish to smooth the path of his administration," and praised the President for trying to restore harmony in the Cabinet. But his own contribution to harmony was to be a continuation of 'American' under the new pseudonym of 'Catullus.' Evidently he had contracted with Fenno to keep the pot boiling; for, as he puts it to Washington: "I cannot conceal from you that I have had some instrumentality of late in the retaliations which have fallen upon certain public characters, and that I find myself placed in a situation not to be able to recede for the present." Even the purple patches and tit-bits of 'Catullus' are not particularly good. The invective lacks finish, as when he pretends to have stripped the garb of quaker simplicity from the concealed voluptuary; or in the following: "Mr. Jefferson has hitherto been distinguished as the quiet, modest, retiring philosopher and the plain, simple, unambitious Republican. He shall now for the first time be regarded as the intriguing incendiary, the aspiring turbulent competitor." <sup>1</sup>

Though Jefferson never condescended to answer Hamilton in the press, he wrote one public letter which may perhaps have served a purpose at the time and might serve another now:—

TO THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Philadelphia, January 2, 1793.

SIR,

According to the Resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 31st of December, delivered to me yesterday, I have the honour to lay

<sup>1</sup> See the third article of 'Catullus' which appeared September 29, 1792.



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before you a list of the several persons employed in my office, with the salaries allowed to each, as follows:

	Dollars.
George Taylor, jr. (of New York), chief clerk, his salary fixed by law . . . . .	800
Jacob Blackwell (of New York), clerk . . . . .	500
George Pfeiffer (of Pennsylvania), clerk . . . . .	500
Philip Freneau (of New York), clerk for foreign languages . .	250
Sampson Crosby (of Massachusetts), messenger and office-keeper .	250

The act of Congress of June the 4th, 1790, c. 18, allowed me an additional clerk with the same salary as the chief clerk. After the retirement of the person first appointed, whose services had been particularly desirable, because of his long and intimate acquaintance with the papers of the office, it did not appear necessary to make further use of the indulgence of that law. No new appointment, therefore, has been made.

The clerk for foreign languages has but half the usual salary. I found his clerkship on this establishment when I came into office, and made no change in it, except that, in the time of his predecessor, when translations were required from any language with which he was unacquainted, they were sent to a special translator, and paid for by the public. The present clerk is required to defray this expense himself.

I have the honour to be, with the most perfect respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

TH. JEFFERSON.

Such was the staff with which Jefferson conducted the principal department of government in a manner which on his retirement evoked the applause even of the Federalists. Mr. Gladstone himself could not have asked for a more perfect union of economy and efficiency.

At the end of September, 1792, Jefferson started from Monticello for Philadelphia, stopping for a night at Mount Vernon, where the President, after a long talk about the Monarchists, the Treasury, and the Funding system, again exhorted him not to retire. The *Ana* and Washington's own letters show how earnestly the President sought to

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mediate between his two secretaries and to bring about an accommodation. Having consented to stand for a second time he was chosen by a unanimous vote of the Electoral College. John Adams was re-elected to the Vice Presidency, receiving seventy-seven votes, a majority of twenty-seven over George Clinton of New York, the republican candidate.

## CHAPTER III

### PUBLIC CREDIT AND WAR DEBTS

"It is hard for an empty bag to stand upright."

— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

THE first Congress under the new Constitution of the United States met in New York early in April, 1789. By the end of September, when it adjourned, it had enacted a tariff and had thus provided the Government with means of restoring public credit. The war had been financed partly by paper money, partly by loans, foreign and domestic. On the domestic loans Congress had defaulted, and their value had fallen very low. Hearing of Hamilton's intentions speculators began to buy up debt certificates at rapidly rising prices during the summer and autumn of 1789. Hamilton admitted that many holders of the domestic debt had bought it at a fourth or a fifth of its face value. But his report on the Public Credit (January, 1790) insisted that all holders alike of the foreign and domestic debt should receive the face value of their certificates plus accrued interest; and his view prevailed over the opposition of Madison, who wished to discriminate against speculators in favour of the original holders. Madison and his party in the House of Representatives were really champions of the soldiers and farmers who had parted with their certificates in ignorance of what was coming, while the Hamiltonian party stood for the mercantile and financial interests which now owned the great

## Public Credit and War Debts

bulk of the debt and stood to make huge profits if the report was adopted.

The argument on both sides was well maintained, and even now it is not very easy to decide on which side the balance of justice and expediency rests. But the big battalions were behind Hamilton and the Treasury. The atmosphere of New York favoured the moneyed interest. Those who had sold their certificates were mostly ignorant, poor, scattered, and unorganised. Those who had bought them were very much on the spot. After the heat had subsided, a cool critic touched on the influences which bore Hamilton to victory. The speculators and jobbers, he wrote, could press their claims with boldness under the imposing plea of keeping public faith and fulfilling public contracts :—

“They therefore exerted all their influence on the question, through the public journals, by canvassing with the members, and even, as it is said, by more potent appeals to their interests, in offering to make them partners in their speculations. During the whole discussion the gallery of the House of Representatives was thronged with this class, eager to know the result of their past speculations, and to regulate their future efforts. Certificates, which it was proposed by funding to raise to par, had been currently sold at two shillings and sixpence in the pound, some at still less; and even at the time of the debate they had not risen above ten shillings. Three vessels had left New York, immediately after the secretary’s report, freighted with the means of purchasing those evidences of the public debt in the Carolinas and Georgia.”

Hamilton carried his point by a large majority, and the speculators hailed the author of their fortunes as the first of financiers. But — as the writer we have just quoted observes — the injustice done to the original holders rankled all over the country. In most of the States the value of land had fallen (so Hamilton himself reported)

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from 20 to 50 per cent. The spectacle of cunning men with fore-knowledge of the Treasury's plan getting rich in a few weeks by buying up the certificates of those who had not heard the news was exasperating to the impoverished farmer; and the gambling spirit thus encouraged wrought much mischief before the bubble burst. Whatever be the verdict of financiers, a triumph of legality over equity is never pleasant to contemplate, and many good citizens went on regretting long after Hamilton's plans had passed that so many soldiers and patriots of the revolution were tricked out of the tardy compensation provided for them by their country, while jobbers with inside knowledge, like the fox in the fable, ran off with the reward due to valour.

Hamilton had much more difficulty in persuading Congress to assume the war debts of the States, and but for Jefferson's assistance this part of his plan might not have been carried. The broad argument for Assumption was that, as the States had taken up arms in a common cause, and shared alike in the boon of Independence which their common efforts had won, they were all equally bound to contribute to the expense of the war, according to their ability. Hence the debts contracted in support of the war by the individual States were as much the debts of the whole as those contracted in the name of the confederation. Their creditors therefore had a right to look to the general government for payment, and government was under a moral obligation to pay them. Madison and his friends, who opposed assumption, denied that either the States or the State creditors had any right to look to the United States for payment. They even doubted whether the Central Government had power under the Constitution to assume State debts; in any case payment should

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only be made where a State could prove that it had advanced more than its just proportion to the common cause. To assume State debts indiscriminately would be to relieve "those states most who least deserved it, and subject those states, which, like Pennsylvania and Virginia, had already heavily taxed themselves for the sake of reducing their debts, to the burthen of further taxation for paying the debts of others."<sup>1</sup> These arguments prevailed. Hamilton was beaten by 31 votes to 29, after one of "the most bitter and angry contests" — so Jefferson wrote — "ever known in Congress before or since the union of the States": —

"I arrived in the midst of it. But a stranger to the ground, a stranger to the actors on it, so long absent as to have lost all familiarity with the subject, and as yet unaware of its object, I took no concern in it. The great and trying question, however, was lost in the House of Representatives. So high were the feuds excited by this subject, that on its rejection business was suspended. Congress met and adjourned without doing anything; the parties being too much out of temper to do business together. The eastern members particularly, who, with Smith, from South Carolina, were the principal gamblers in these scenes, threatened a secession and dissolution. Hamilton was in despair. As I was going to the President's one day, I met him in the street. He walked me backwards and forwards before the President's door for half an hour. He painted pathetically the temper into which the Legislature had been wrought; the disgust of those who were called the creditor states; the danger of *secession* of their members, and the separation of the States."

Though the question did not fall in Jefferson's department, Hamilton represented it to his colleague as a common concern on which members of the Administration should rally round the President; and as the measure had only been lost by a small majority it was probable that an

<sup>1</sup>See Tucker's *Life of Jefferson*.

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appeal from Jefferson to his friends in the House "might effect a change in the vote, and the machine of government, now suspended, might be again set into motion."

Jefferson, willing to oblige his colleague and anxious to preserve the harmony between the States, promised to assist. Accordingly he asked some friends to dinner to meet Hamilton; and it was agreed that, to restore concord, the vote of rejection should be rescinded. To sweeten the pill for the Southern States Hamilton's men agreed to fix the future seat of government on the Potomac, after giving it to Philadelphia for ten years. In this way the logs were rolled successfully. In Jefferson's words "assumption was passed, and twenty millions of stock divided among favoured States and thrown in as a pabulum to the stock-jobbing herd. This added to the number of votaries to the Treasury, and made its chief the master of every vote in the Legislature, which might give to the government the direction suited to his political views." The bitterness of these after-reflections will surprise anyone who is not well read in the politics of Washington's first and second administrations. Statesmen seldom confess that they have erred; or that they have been taken in by a colleague. But Jefferson felt that he had been duped, and said so: "I was most ignorantly and innocently made to hold the candle."

Whether Hamilton really gained anything either in financial reputation or political influence by the assumption of State debts may be doubted. Gallatin, the most competent and brilliant of his successors at the Treasury, was able to show that, had the United States waited to assume the State debts till the accounts had been finally settled, instead of 'assuming at random,' the accounts of the Union with the individual States "might have

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been placed in the same relative situation in which they now stand by assuming eleven millions instead of twenty-two. The additional and unnecessary debt created by that fatal measure amounts therefore to \$10,883,628." 'Fatal' indeed seems too strong a word; but this was not the only serious mistake in Hamilton's schemes. Another of his proposals was to make the public debt irredeemable except at the rate of about one per cent annually. He and his supporters seem to have regarded a national debt held in the country as a national blessing, and to have aimed at securing its supposed benefits for posterity. Fortunately — to quote an American writer — "this part of the Secretary's plan underwent a material modification; for had either of his propositions on this subject prevailed, the public debt, instead of being now [1837] paid off, would have been unextinguishable before 1890 or 1940 (according to the terms selected by the creditor) except at a rate which might have enhanced the amount more than fifty per cent."

The problem of the domestic debts of the Federal and State governments being thus disposed of in general conformity with Hamilton's report, there remained the question of restoring American credit abroad.

Hamilton's principle that the money borrowed from the French monarchy and the loans raised in Amsterdam and elsewhere should be honoured encountered no opposition. The difficulty was how to find the means of payment. It was no use printing paper dollars. Interest and instalments of principal could only be repaid in gold, silver, or produce. We have seen (from the correspondence of 1786 and 1787) how thoroughly Jefferson understood the problem in all its complexity. He had had painful experience of it as Governor of Virginia, as a private debtor to British mer-



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chants, and as Minister in France, when to his infinite chagrin Congress failed to scrape together the trifle of two thousand guineas interest due on a debt of honour to the French officers who had served in America. On taking up his duties as Secretary of State Jefferson soon began to receive urgent applications from Paris; but at first he could only send words of hope and good intentions. In 1790, however, a loan of three million florins was arranged in Amsterdam, part of which was destined for payments to France. Jefferson urged Short to use this instrument diplomatically as a means of opening the French colonies to American trade. The Dutch loan was not issued until the following spring. On May 1, 1791, Jefferson wrote to President Washington: "Our loan in Amsterdam for two and a half million of florins filled in two hours and a half after it was opened." A few days before he had written to Short: "You know how strongly we desire to pay off our whole debt to France, and that for this purpose we will use our credit as far as it will hold good." At the same time he was to dissuade the French government from listening to overtures from speculators who might offer them a lump sum. Short was to say that the United States "reserves to itself the right to paying nowhere but into the treasury of France according to their contract." At this time the French paper money, which the United States was buying to discharge the debt, was depreciating; and this naturally led to representations from M. de Ternant, the French Minister at Philadelphia. He conferred with Jefferson, who sent him a written assurance that the United States would not take advantage of its old ally's monetary difficulties.

"I have communicated to the President," he wrote, "what passed between us the other day, on the subject of the payments made to

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France by the United States in the *assignats* of that country, since they have lost their par with gold and silver; and after conferences, by his instruction, with the Secretary of the Treasury, I am authorized to assure you, that the Government of the United States, have no idea of paying their debt in a depreciated medium, and that in the final liquidation of the payments which shall have been made, due regard will be had to an equitable allowance for the circumstances of depreciation."

Hamilton, it would seem, was not sorry to buy the *assignats* cheaply and (for the time being) to pay off the foreign debt in the cheaper paper money which the French government had legalised for the payment of its own creditors. For Jefferson's original draft, after the words 'depreciated medium:' ran, "and they will take measures for making their payments in their just value, avoiding all benefit from depreciation, and desiring on their part to be guarded against any unjust loss from the circumstances of mere exchange." He altered this to the text to meet Hamilton's views.

At this time Jefferson was in good spirits. In a letter to his friend, John Paul Jones, the famous Admiral, who was then in Russia, describing the 'tranquil prosperity' of America he writes: "Our new constitution works well, and gives general satisfaction. Public credit is high. . . . A census of our numbers, taken this summer, gives us reason to believe we are about four millions of all ages and sexes." Within a year this tranquillity was broken by a catastrophe which was to drench France and Europe in blood and misery for more than twenty years.

In January, 1792, Gouverneur Morris, a friend of Hamilton's, was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary at the French court. In forwarding his commission with a letter of credence for the King, Jefferson expressed a desire that he should constantly act "in that spirit of sincere

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friendship and attachment which we bear to the French nation," and that he should especially endeavour to extend the privileges of American commerce with France and her Colonies. By this time the cause of absolute monarchy was lost in France; but her emigré nobles were attracting the sympathy of neighbouring despotisms, and in February the King of Prussia allied himself with Austria to crush insurgent democracy.

Jefferson was not the man to regret the fall of a monarchy and the proclamation of a republic, much as he deplored the revolutionary violence of which Lafayette and many of his friends were victims. But the confusion in France was to cause him many difficulties. In October he wrote to Gouverneur Morris that until a legitimate government had taken the place of the late Constitution "we cannot continue the payment of our debts to France, because there is no person authorized to receive it and to give us an unobjectionable acquittal." The suspension however did not proceed from any wish to delay payment, or to oppose the settlement of their government in any way the French nation desired. In March of the following year, 1793, he received information that a National Assembly had met with full powers to transact the affairs of the French nation, and he informed Morris that an application had been received for three millions of livres, to be laid out in provisions, of which Paris was in desperate need. "Urged by the strongest attachment to that country," wrote Jefferson, "and thinking it even providential that moneys lent to us in distress could be repaid under like circumstances, we had no hesitation to comply with the application, and arrangements are accordingly taken for furnishing this sum at epochs accommodated to the demand and our means of paying it." It was fortunate

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for the American treasury that the new French republic was glad to recover its debt in provisions, which it was possible to furnish, instead of in gold or silver which could not have been supplied. But M. Genêt, the new French minister, demanded that the whole debt should be paid at once in produce. This was impossible, but there was disagreement between Jefferson and Hamilton as to how Genêt's propositions should be handled. Jefferson acted with the utmost circumspection. "I think it very material myself," he wrote to the President in June, "to keep alive the friendly sentiments of that country [France] so far as can be done without risking war or double payment." He suggested that instalments should be advanced at epochs convenient to the Treasury, and at the same time wrote to Genêt: —

"The instalments, as they are settled by conventions between the two nations, far exceed the ordinary resources of the United States. To accomplish them completely and punctually we are obliged to anticipate the revenues of future terms by loans to as great an extent as we can prudently attempt. As they are arranged however by the Convention, they give us time for successive and gradual efforts. But to crowd these anticipations all into a single one, and that to be executed in the present instant, would more than hazard that state of credit, the preservation of which can alone enable us to meet the different payments at the time agreed on."

Jefferson's dislike of debt, and his desire that the United States should be clear of it led him afterwards to philosophise on the subject and to formulate the doctrine that perpetual debt is inadmissible, and that a generation has no right to lay a tribute for its wars and extravagances upon posterity. His views were sometimes absurdly represented as being favourable to repudiation; but, as he wrote to Washington, "no man is more ardently intent to see the public debt soon and sacredly paid off than I

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am." As time went on he began to connect public debt, not only with stock-jobbing and corruption, but also with the facilities it affords to war, and with the certainty that unlimited borrowing leads to oppressive taxation and eventually to bankruptcy. The practical upshot of his views is concisely summarised in a sentence written in 1816 to Governor Plumer: "I place economy among the first and most important of republican virtues, and public debt as the greatest of the dangers to be feared."

The moral and economic philosophy of war debt is again of absorbing interest now that another exhausting war has reproduced in Europe conditions of bankruptcy far more desperate and menacing and on an infinitely larger scale than those which embarrassed the government of the United States in the period following the war of independence. By a strange turn of fortune's wheel the situations of creditor and debtor have been reversed. Instead of Europe complaining of American default, and asking for payment, the United States as creditor country has been claiming a strict legal settlement of its loans to European governments.

Besides the public debts of over eleven million dollars, mainly due to France and Holland, there were also the private debts of American planters and merchants to England, which were estimated at a much larger sum. Before the war it had been customary for British merchants to give a year's credit to their correspondents in the Colonies. The war of course suspended payments. During the war and after it many of the American debtors became insolvent. Under the Treaty of Peace Congress agreed to help British citizens to recover what was due to them; but some of the American States passed laws enabling their debtors to avoid payment or to pay in

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worthless paper money. In 1791 the British Government sent a representative named George Hammond, with whom Jefferson was before acquainted, to negotiate on this and other subjects arising out of the peace treaty. Hammond opened the matter of the debts in March, 1792, and Jefferson explored the whole question with his usual thoroughness. On May 29, 1792, he addressed to the British Minister, in the form of a letter, a state paper which runs to nearly a hundred pages in his published works, and is one of the most interesting and valuable documents in existence on the law and philosophy of war debts.

Hammond had collected evidence of American infractions of the peace treaty, consisting mainly of statutes passed by individual States to shield debtors, and of judicial decisions denying to British subjects the right of recovering what was owed to them. As different States of the Union had handled their war debts differently, by Acts prohibiting, restricting, or postponing payment, Jefferson found it necessary to deal with the subject in detail. But he also laid down certain general principles and considerations.

The first was the failure of his Britannic Majesty to carry out all the clauses of the treaty. Jefferson recites British infractions which had caused losses of trade and property to the American Union. One of these — the failure to evacuate military posts on the Great Lakes — had “cut us off from the fur trade, which before the war had been always of great importance as a source of remittance for the payment of our debts to Great Britain.” Further a large number of slaves had been carried off. On account of this the State of Virginia (“materially affected by this infraction”) had passed various acts to relieve Virginian debtors and to suspend the discharge of



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obligations to British creditors. Similar legislation had been passed by South Carolina. Jefferson urged in excuse "the desolated condition" in which British armies had left that State, "and the almost entire destruction" of the means of paying debts. Rhode Island, it appears, had passed a law authorizing its citizens to pay gold debts due to British creditors in paper money.

A further argument called in aid by Jefferson deserves citation. Translated into modern politics it means that a state has no right to exclude by high tariffs or prohibitions the products of another state from which it is demanding the payment of debts.

"To the necessities for some delay in the payment of debts may be added the British commercial regulations, lessening our means of payment by prohibiting us from carrying in our own bottoms our own produce to their dominions in our neighbourhood, and excluding valuable branches of it from their home markets by prohibitory duties. The means of payment constitute one of the motives of purchase at the moment of purchase. If these means are taken away by the creditor himself he ought not in conscience to complain of a mere retardation of his debt, which is the effect of his own act."

Next came the question whether it was reasonable to expect a country, which had been reduced by war to an inconvertible paper currency, to pay in gold. Jefferson points out that as a result of the war "the stock of hard money, which we possessed in an ample degree at the beginning of the war, soon flowed into Europe for supplies of arms, ammunitions, and other necessities . . . we were reduced then to the resource of a paper medium, and that completed the exile of hard money." But though the American Colonists had lost their gold and silver, the war "closed with a stipulation that we should pay a large mass of debt in such coin." Upon this situation Jefferson commented:—

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"If the whole soil of the United States had been offered for sale for ready coin it would not have raised as much as would have satisfied this stipulation. The thing then was impossible; and reason and authority declare: 'Si l'empêchement est réel, il faut donner du temps; car nul n'est tenu à l'impossible.' (Vattel iv, 51): 'If the obstacle be real, time must be given, for no one is bound to an impossibility.' We should with confidence have referred the case to the arbiter proposed by another jurist, who lays it down that a party 'is not obliged to pay more than he can, and the decision of how much he can pay may be left by the other sovereign to the award of an honest arbitrator.'"

Objection was also raised by the British Government "to the proceedings of our legislative and judicial bodies, that they have refused to allow interest to run on debts during the course of the war." Jefferson replies first that "interest is not a part of the debt, but something added to the debt by way of damage for the detention of it." Until the time of Henry the Eighth interest was unlawful and "is still so in Roman Catholic countries." And it was laid down by leading English authorities that "where, by a general and national calamity, nothing is made out of lands which are assigned for payment of interest, it ought not to run on during the time of such calamity." Jefferson observes: "This is exactly the case in question. Can a more general national calamity be conceived than that universal devastation which took place in many of these States during the war?" He goes on to say:—

"Under these circumstances no instrument or title of debt, however formal or sacred, can give right to interest. Let us present the question in another point of view. Your own law forbade the payment of interest when it forbade the receipt of American produce into Great Britain, and made that produce fair prize on its way from the debtor to the creditor."

Jefferson's despatch was forwarded by the British Minister to be pigeon-holed by the British Foreign Office, and

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during the remainder of his tenure of office the dispute remained in abeyance.

This chapter on debts and public credit would give an incomplete view of Jefferson's contributions as Secretary of State to finance and constitutional law if we omitted his opposition to the establishment of the Bank of the United States. In the *Ana* he observes that Hamilton's schemes were not completed by the establishment of the Funding System and the assumption of State debts. The power of the Treasury over the Legislature "would be lost with the loss of the individual members whom it had enriched, and some engine of influence more permanent must be contrived while these myrmidons were yet in place to carry it through all opposition." This engine was the Bank of the United States. The Bank Bill passed the Senate, but met with strenuous opposition in the House of Representatives from Madison and his friends, who were beginning to form the anti-Federalist, or Republican party. When it had passed, Washington long hesitated to sign it, and asked the opinion of the Cabinet on the constitutionality of the Bill. Hamilton and Knox were for it; Jefferson and Randolph against it. Jefferson's "opinion against the constitutionality of a national bank," forwarded to the President on February 15, 1791, is a landmark in the constitutional history of the United States.

He starts with the principle laid down in the Tenth Amendment that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States or to the people." To step beyond the boundary thus drawn round the powers of Congress would be to take possession of a boundless field of power insusceptible of definition. The institution

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of a Bank did not fall under such enumeration of powers as a power to lay taxes, or a power to borrow money, or a power to regulate commerce. Nor could the Bank be justified by the power "to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying into execution the enumerated powers." A Bank might facilitate the collection of taxes or the regulation of commerce, but it was not necessary for either. The Constitution did not intend to enable Congress to do whatever they thought good for the United States. For as Congress would be the sole judges, that would really be a power to do whatever they pleased. "It was intended to lace them up straitly within the enumerated powers."

A terse examination of the general conveniences of a Bank as set forth in Hamilton's Report shows that the Treasury and Banks together would fulfil most of the purposes contemplated by Hamilton. As for the power of increasing circulating medium, that, wrote Jefferson, "according to my ideas of paper money is clearly a demerit." No doubt there were advantages as well as disadvantages in such an institution, but the world might go on very well without it; and "can it be thought that the Constitution intended that for a shade or two of *convenience* more or less Congress should be authorized to break down the most ancient and fundamental laws of the several States; such as those against Mortmain, the Laws of Alienage, the rules of Descent, the acts of Distribution, the laws of Escheat and Forfeiture, the laws of Monopoly?"

Apart from the strength and acumen of Jefferson's arguments there was nothing in the opinion which should have given offence to Hamilton. Indeed, after pointing out that the negative of the President is the

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shield provided by the Constitution to protect the rights of the Executive, the Judiciary, and the States against invasions of the Legislature, he added that, unless the President's mind was tolerably clear that the Bill was unauthorised by the Constitution, "a just respect for the wisdom of the Legislature" would naturally decide the balance in favour of the Bill passed by Congress. Washington eventually signed the Bill. The Bank almost immediately paid a dividend of ten per cent on six months working, and another impetus was given to the stock-jobbing mania. But in March, 1792, so Jefferson wrote to Short, Bank paper stock had fallen about forty per cent in two or three weeks, and "this nefarious business" was becoming more and more detestable to the public.

This controversy over the Bank helped to accentuate the lines of party cleavage. The party of Hamilton admired the British government and British institutions. Their distrust of the French Revolution was developing into aversion and horror. The party of Jefferson disliked the British monarchy and aristocracy, and rejoiced that the French Revolution was setting up republican equality and liberty in Europe. The party of Hamilton favoured a strong and active government, was not averse to debt, and had no objection to increasing taxation. It was prepared, as it soon showed, to put sharp constraints upon individual liberty and to make unsparing use of military force. Jefferson and his friends stood for State rights and the liberty of the individual, for low taxes, and for an army on the smallest possible scale. In Jefferson's eyes militarism was not only burdensome to the citizens, but dangerous to the supremacy of law. To these divisions, which in themselves were quite sufficient to provide an honest foundation for a two-party system — indeed it

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were to be wished that some modern party differences were half as real — the Federalists and Republicans were now at issue about the construction of the Constitution. The former, fearful of disunion, inclined to a liberal construction which would enlarge the Federal authority; their opponents, mainly from the Southern States, preferred a more strict and literal interpretation which would keep the new government to the letter of its charter, and secure their rights and powers to the several States of the Union.

## CHAPTER IV

### JEFFERSON'S FOREIGN POLICY

"Courage belongs to negotiation as well as to operations in the field."

— BURKE

NOWADAYS a Foreign Secretary is encompassed by permanent secretaries, private secretaries, assistant secretaries, clerks, and shorthand writers. Jefferson did his own work, wrote his own despatches, thought out his reports, and employed his knowledge of European diplomacy

'to settle peace, or to unfold

The drift of hollow states hard to be spelled.'

He enjoyed the confidence of Washington, and so far as one can judge from correspondence and memoirs, he steadily resisted those temptations to secrecy which have been the bane of so many European Chancelleries. Neither Washington nor his colleagues in the Cabinet ever had cause to complain that Jefferson had practised any evasion, or failed to bring forward any matter of public importance. With all the art and craft of an accomplished diplomatist, with fine manners and address, with immense knowledge of the world and of all the news that could be collected, Jefferson united perfect loyalty to the President, to the spirit of representative institutions and to the citizens of the United States, whose servant he professed and endeavoured to be. His policy in so far as it had a bias was influenced by fidelity to republicanism, friendship for

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France, and a desire to promote human liberty and free institutions whenever those high aims were consistent with the peace and welfare of his own country. He was a jealous champion of American rights and interests on the Continent, and especially in the Mississippi Valley. His policy towards the Indians was based upon principles of justice and fair dealing. His conduct of delicate affairs with unfriendly governments was always tactful and prudent. He knew how to maintain the dignity of his country and to sustain its interests without provocation. In every controversy he maintained a sense of proportion and of the distinction between attainable and unattainable objects. All his negotiations were qualified by a firm conviction that peace was the greatest of all American interests.

Towards the claims of the Spaniards to monopolise the navigation of the Mississippi Jefferson however opposed an unyielding negative. In these claims he never would acquiesce. His negotiations with the Spanish Government went on until he left office, nor was this vexed question settled until, ten years later, President Jefferson by a stroke of genius effected the purchase of Louisiana.

Of his controversy with Great Britain and its able representative Hammond over the debts, an account has been given in the previous chapter.

But the proclamation of the French Republic in September, 1792, the execution of the King in the following January, and the outbreak of war between France and England a month later, threw all other troubles and anxieties into the background. These menacing events made it difficult for Jefferson to persist in his intention of retiring. The President's expostulations and entreaties were supported by a consideration pressed on him by his



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friends — so he wrote on January 26, 1793 — “that my retirement, when I had been attacked in the public papers, would injure me in the eyes of the public, who would suppose I either withdrew from investigation, or because I had not tone of mind sufficient to meet slander.”

In February he promised the President to continue until the summer or autumn, but rejected the proposal that he should ‘coalesce’ with Hamilton. Early in April came the news that the French, after their ambassador had been expelled from London, had declared war on Great Britain. Republicanism was now arrayed against monarchy, nobility, feudalism, and serfdom. It called on all peoples to unite against their oppressors and vindicate the Rights of Man. The Jacobins of Paris supposed that, because among the middle class dissenters and working men of England there was a strong body of reformers, therefore England was ripe for revolution. They were much mistaken. The excesses of the last eight months had alarmed property and alienated moral and religious feeling in England. The nation, pugnacious, obstinate, attached to its own customs and institutions, was far more inclined to make war on its hereditary foe than to receive French notions of liberty, equality, and fraternity from doctrinaires, whose mathematical formulas were sharpened and enforced by the guillotine. So began the long exhausting struggle which sank all Europe into pauperism and dominated American politics for the next twenty-three years.

In the United States the proclamation of a Republic in France had been received with almost general rejoicings. Their own example had been followed by the allies to whom they owed their national emancipation. Pride and gratitude were united in an emotional enthusiasm, which

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even the news of massacres and executions failed to extinguish. Until the following summer American sentiment was predominantly pro-French. But for Washington and Jefferson the country would probably have plunged headlong into ruin. One held the balance; the other restrained the warlike proclivities of republican extremists. Washington was at Mount Vernon when he heard that France and England were at war, and at once hurried to meet his Cabinet in Philadelphia. What was to be done? The United States had made treaties with the French Monarchy, which guaranteed the French West Indies in case of a war and also gave privileges to French prizes. Washington's Cabinet had to consider whether the treaties were binding; if so, should they be suspended; if not, would they involve necessarily breaches of neutrality and war with England? Could the French Republic be regarded as firmly established, and should its new Minister, Citizen Genêt, who had been appointed to supersede M. de Ternant in the United States, be recognized and received by Washington as the fully accredited representative of the French nation?

After a Cabinet consultation Washington asked his colleagues for written opinions on the general question "whether the United States have a right to renounce their treaties with France, or to hold them suspended until the Government of that country shall be established." Hamilton had argued that they were entitled to renounce or suspend the treaties; that the new French Minister should not be received without qualifications, and further that the United States could not preserve their neutrality unless the treaties with France were either renounced or suspended.] On this Jefferson submitted (April 28, 1793) an opinion equally to be admired for its strength, learn-

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ing, and subtlety. After summarising the positions taken up by Hamilton and acknowledging their ingenuity, he proceeds to lay down "the principles which, according to my understanding, govern the case":—

"I consider the people who constitute a society or nation as the source of all authority in that nation, as free to transact their common concerns by any agents they think proper, to change those agents individually, or the organisation of them in form or function, whenever they please; that all the acts done by those agents under the authority of the nation are the acts of the nation, are obligatory on them, and enure to their use, and can in no wise be annulled or affected by any change in the form of the government or of the persons administering it. Consequently the treaties between the United States and France were not treaties between the United States and Louis Capet, but between the two nations of America and France; and the nations remaining in existence, though both of them have since changed their forms of government, the treaties are not annulled by these changes."

Proceeding next to the dangers anticipated from allowing the treaties with France to subsist, Jefferson shows them to be exaggerated or fanciful. The treaties as a whole are not incompatible with that "fair neutrality" which should be the object of American policy, and the question of withdrawing from the guarantee clause in regard to the French West Indies can be considered if and when the danger anticipated actually becomes imminent. Besides, to disavow the treaties "without just cause or compensation," would give France a cause for war and force America into association with her enemies. "An injured friend is the bitterest of foes."

Hamilton had hooked his policy to an *obiter dictum* of Vattel<sup>1</sup> that where one party to a Treaty of Alliance so changes its form of government as to "render the alliance useless, dangerous, or disagreeable to the other," that

<sup>1</sup> See Vattel, II, § 197.

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other "is free to renounce the alliance." After proving that this quotation was at variance, not only with the opinions of Grotius and other writers on international law, but with Vattel's general insistence on the sanctity of treaties, Jefferson proceeds to crush his adversary:—

"But even had this doctrine been as true as it is manifestly false, it would have been asked, to whom is it that the treaties with France have been *disagreeable*? How will it be proved that they are *useless*?

"The conclusion of the sentence [from Vattel] suggests a reflection too strong to be suppressed: 'for the party may say with truth, that it would not have allied itself with this nation, if it had been under the present form of its government.' The republic of the United States allied itself with France when under a despotic government. She changes her government, declares it shall be a republic extremely free, and, in the meantime, is governing herself as such. And it is proposed that America shall declare the treaties void, because 'it may say with truth that it would not have allied itself with that nation if it had been under the present form of government!' Who is the American who can say with truth, that he would not have allied himself with France if she had been a republic, or that a republic of any form would be as *disagreeable* as her ancient despotism?"

Upon the whole, therefore, Jefferson advised Washington that the treaties with France were still binding, that the Minister from France should be received, and that his reception would not "take from us that right which exists at all times of liberating ourselves when an adherence to the treaties would be *ruinous* or *destructive* to the society" for whose safety and protection the American constitution and government existed.

Washington recognised the force of Jefferson's argument and accepted its practical consequences. He decided that the validity of the treaties was not impaired by the change of government in France, and that the new Minister should be received without condition or qualifications.

On April 8, Edmond Genêt arrived at Charleston in

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the French frigate, *L'Embuscade*. Her figure-head was a liberty cap; her rigging was emblazoned with warnings to tyrants and appeals to republican sentiment. Genêt decided to complete his journey by land, while the ship proceeded to Philadelphia. On her way she captured two British vessels and brought them into port amid immense popular enthusiasm, her salute of 15 guns being answered by field pieces on Market Street Wharf, fired by volunteers in sympathy with the French cause.

On May 5, Jefferson wrote to Monroe:—

“All the old spirit of 1776 is rekindling. The newspapers, from Boston to Charleston, prove this, and even the monocrat papers are obliged to publish the most furious philippics against England. A French frigate took an English prize off the Capes of Delaware the other day, and sent her up here. Upon her coming into sight, thousands and thousands of the yeomanry of the city crowded and covered the wharves. Never before was such a crowd seen there; and when the British colours were seen *reversed*, and the French flying above them, they burst into peals of exultation. I wish we may be able to repress the spirit of the people within the limits of a fair neutrality.”

For preserving this, as he tells both Monroe and Madison, and avoiding a rupture with France he was constantly indebted to the President; for Randolph could not be counted on, so that the votes in the Cabinet were generally ‘two and a half against one and a half.’ Poor Randolph — whose ingenious compromises sometimes proved useful to the President — had ‘no colour of his own’, wrote Jefferson a little later during the height of the trouble with Genêt: “when he is with me, he is a whig; when with Hamilton, he is a tory; when he is with the President, he is what he thinks will please him.” This character of their kinsman was neatly rolled up by John Randolph of Roanoke in a mordant metaphor: “the chameleon on the aspen — always trembling, always changing.”

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The story of Edmond Genêt's embassy to the United States has been told in a long and lively chapter by Parton.<sup>1</sup> Here we must be content with a brief outline. Thanks to his sister, who was chief lady to Marie Antoinette and stood high in the favour of the Court, Genêt had risen rapidly in the diplomatic service of Louis. He had embraced republican ideas, but had been chivalrous enough to support Paine's project of getting the King and Queen away to America. To his republicanism and his mastery of the English tongue he owed this appointment to the United States, where his blazing indiscretions, calculated and uncalculated, soon drove Jefferson almost to distraction. After being fêted at Charleston, Genêt made a triumphal progress by land to Philadelphia, where he was welcomed on May 16 by pealing bells, cheering crowds, and a deputation of leading republicans headed by Rittenhouse. His first speech was captivating and comparatively prudent, for he declared: "France does not expect that you should become a party in the war." But from this time onwards his proceedings became more and more inconvenient to the American Government. Deputations, banquets with hymns and toasts to liberty, the singing of the 'Marseillaise,' an entertainment on the *Embuscade* at which the Governor of Pennsylvania was principal guest, fraternisations of French sailors with the citizens, were not relished by the British Minister. The Federalists got up a counter banquet with toasts to the four Georges — George the Third and his son, George Washington, and George Hammond, at which moderation and neutrality were inculcated and Hamilton was not obscurely indicated as the true Patriot Minister.

<sup>1</sup> Parton's *Life of Thomas Jefferson*, Chapter 50.

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Washington had issued a proclamation of neutrality on April 22; but in spite of this Genêt assumed the right to fit out privateers, and to sell prizes in American ports, and even to grant commissions to American citizens to prey upon British commerce. Jefferson saw that this would never do. "I fear," he wrote to Madison, "that fair neutrality will prove a disagreeable pill to our friends, though necessary to keep us out of the calamities of war."

All through June and July Jefferson was trying to conciliate and restrain Genêt; but his intemperate language, his turbulent conduct, his insolent pretensions, his disrespect for law and authority, made it necessary in August to apply for his dismissal. "Never in my opinion," wrote Jefferson to Madison on July 8, "was so calamitous an appointment made as that of the present Minister of France here." Genêt, he says, was 'hot headed, all imagination, no judgment, passionate, disrespectful, and even indecent towards the president.' In the middle of August he wrote to Gouverneur Morris, American Minister in France, to demand Genêt's recall. The request was granted. But instead of returning to a French prison Genêt fell in love with Cornelia, daughter of George Clinton, the republican governor of the State of New York, and lived happily ever afterwards, a worthy citizen devoted to agriculture and science.

At the end of July Jefferson had again begged the President for leave to retire. Again he gave way to pressure; but this time a final date was fixed, and the President reluctantly agreed to dispense with his services at the end of the year, saying: "like a man going to the gallows I am willing to put it off as long as I can."

The popular effervescence in Philadelphia began to die down towards the end of the summer, and in August an

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outbreak of yellow fever in the city caused a general exodus. In the first week of September the Cabinet made haste to depart to their homes. By that time American neutrality in the war had been firmly established. Jefferson, braving the epidemic — which had attacked Hamilton — stayed to clear his letter files. On the 17th of September he started home, and after stopping on the 22d at Mount Vernon to see Washington, arrived at Monticello on the 25th. The Cabinet was summoned to Germantown on November 1. By that time the yellow fever had abated, and Congress met again at Philadelphia on December 2. On the 21st Washington, who throughout the year had pretty consistently followed Jefferson's advice against Hamilton and Knox — on one important occasion against Hamilton, Knox, and Randolph combined — made a last effort to induce Jefferson to stay. But this time his Secretary of State was inexorable, and on December 31 he wrote his letter of resignation, concluding: "I carry into my retirement a lively sense of your goodness, and shall continue gratefully to remember it." The President's reply (January 1, 1794) ran as follows: —

"I yesterday received with sincere regret your resignation of the office of Secretary of State. Since it has been impossible to prevail upon you to forego any longer the indulgence of your desire for private life, the event, however anxious I am to avert it, must be submitted to.

"But I cannot suffer you to leave your station without assuring you, that the opinion which I had formed of your integrity and talents, and which dictated your original nomination, has been confirmed by the fullest experience; and that both have been eminently displayed in the discharge of your duty.

"Let a conviction of my most earnest prayers for your happiness accompany you in your retirement; and while I accept, with the warmest thanks, your solicitude for my welfare, I beg you to believe that I am dear sir, etc."



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On January 5 Jefferson set out from Philadelphia for Monticello, feeling like a prisoner released from a dungeon. In his *Life of Washington* John Marshall relaxes for a moment from an almost uniform bias against Jefferson to tell his readers that "this gentleman withdrew from political station at a moment when he stood particularly high in the esteem of his own countrymen."

A few weeks afterwards Congress published Jefferson's correspondence with Genêt and Hammond. Its tone delighted patriotic men of both parties, and if it did not satisfy extremists, yet the publication — as Marshall puts it — considerably lessened for a time the hostilities of his enemies without diminishing the attachment of his friends. Thus our tired gladiator left the arena with enhanced reputation, after many harassing conflicts from which neither credit nor glory could have been anticipated.

BOOK V  
PRINCIPLES AND PARTIES  
CHAPTER I

IN RETIREMENT

*Frugibus alternis, non consule, computat annos;  
Auctumnum pomis, ver sibi flore notat.*

*By crops not consuls he the year computes;  
Spring by its flowers, the autumn by its fruits.*

— CLAUDIAN'S OLD FARMER OF VERONA

FROM January 16, 1794, when he reached Monticello to regain — as he fondly hoped and intended for the remainder of his life — the freedom of a private citizen, Jefferson's rural felicity lasted nearly three years. At the end of 1796 he was elected Vice President of the United States and took office on March 4, 1797. He had not yet completed his fiftieth year, but his health of mind and body had suffered from worry and overwork. Sick of the drudgeries of office and of contention with Hamilton, he seems to have mistaken weariness and fatigue for a permanent debility. At any rate he was in earnest about retiring from active politics. His affairs badly needed personal attention, and he found more congenial occupation on his estate, in his garden, library, and workshops than in the office of Secretary of State. His beautiful daughter Maria was 16; Martha, the elder, was already mother of a son, Thomas Jefferson Randolph. In

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their society and that of many friends the Squire of Monticello took great delight.

There is no foundation except malice for the oft-repeated assertion that withdrawal from office was merely a cunning move in the political game with an eye to the leadership of the republican party and the Presidency. It would of course be a poor compliment to Jefferson to confound retirement with a stolid indifference to public affairs. But that it was his deliberate intention not to intermeddle with politics, and that he pursued it until the pressure of friends and the logic of events forced him back into the fray is incontestible. In the latest and largest collection of his published correspondence we find but nine short letters for 1794 and the same number for 1795. And even in these few political allusions are scanty, and there is no sign whatever of a gladiator's craving to return to the arena. "I return to farming," he wrote, April 25, 1794, "with an ardour which I scarcely knew in my youth, and which has got the better entirely of my love of study. Instead of writing ten or twelve letters a day, which I have been in the habit of doing as a thing in course, I put off answering my letters now, farmer-like, till a rainy day." To Edmund Randolph, his successor in office, he quoted Montaigne's saying that ignorance is the softest pillow on which a man can rest his head; adding that he allows himself only one political topic, the corrupt subservience of a section of Congressmen to the Treasury.

Not that Monticello could cease to be a resort of politicians even when its master turned farmer. Though he discontinued his Philadelphia newspapers, Madison, Giles, and other political friends kept him posted in the news from the seat of government. He had left behind him a masterly report on Foreign Commerce, a sort of political

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legacy to his party, which provoked hot debates between Hamiltonians and Jeffersonians in Congress. About this time the British Orders in Council struck so hard at the commerce of neutrals that a wave of indignation swept over the country; and the 'Monocrats' were still further confounded when the French Republic, hard pressed and eager for American aid, cleverly responded by throwing open its West Indian Islands to the trade of the United States. It was an awkward moment for Washington's administration. Hamilton was against war with England, but welcomed any excuse to increase naval and military armaments. Jefferson knew that a section of Republican Jingoës would favour a declaration of war; for it would gratify at the same time an old grudge and a new enthusiasm. But he hoped it would not come to that, and told his friends that they should try to enforce neutral rights in a peaceable way. The monocrats and paper men in Congress, he wrote to Madison, did not want war, but they wanted armies and debts; and although there was a republican majority in Congress on most questions "yet I have always observed that in questions of expense, where members may hope either for offices or for jobs for themselves or their friends, some few will be debauched; and that is sufficient to turn the decision where a majority is at most but small." News of French victories gave hope that the armies of the invading tyrants would be destroyed, and that the Kings, nobles, and priests, who were warring against the French Revolution and human nature, would be brought to the scaffold. "I am still warm," he wrote on May 1, "whenever I think of these scoundrels, though I do it as seldom as I can, preferring infinitely to contemplate the tranquil growth of my lucerne and potatoes. I have so completely withdrawn myself

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from these spectacles of usurpation and misrule that I do not take a single newspaper nor read one a month; and I feel myself infinitely the happier for it." Sympathy with the republican cause in Europe had to be reconciled with an overmastering sense of the calamities which war would bring upon the Union. "I love peace," he wrote, "and I am anxious that we should give the world still another useful lesson, by showing to them other modes of punishing injuries than by war, which is as much a punishment to the punisher as to the sufferer." He therefore recommended to his friends in Congress as an alternative that they should cut off commerce with England until her outrages on neutral trade were abandoned. A Non-Importation Bill was actually carried in the House of Representatives. Its defeat in the Senate, May, 1794, made Jefferson so angry that he began to talk of a movement for shortening the Senatorial term, and even to wonder whether the second chamber ought not to drop out of the Constitution.

Writing to President Washington, with whom he remained in friendly communication, Jefferson supported the embargo policy on the ground that justice on the seas could only be extorted from the British government by distressing British commerce; but most of the letter was devoted to explaining a new and improved system of manuring and rotating crops by which he hoped gradually to rescue his plantations from their wretched condition. 'Slow and sure,' Washington's maxim, was as good, he said, for agriculture as for politics. Meanwhile Washington, missing Jefferson sorely, endeavoured through Randolph to tempt him back to office; but Jefferson was inflexible; though he rejoiced, as he said, in declining this overture, to retain the esteem and approbation of the President. Their good relations were

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however to be shaken at the end of the year, when Washington was induced to denounce the democratic societies which had sprung up on French models in many American towns. Jefferson contrasted these clubs with their rivals, the Cincinnati, whose love of hereditary distinctions and secret meetings in all parts of the Union were very alarming to the friends of democracy. It is wonderful indeed, wrote Jefferson to Madison, December 28, 1794, "that the president should have permitted himself to be the organ of such an attack upon the freedom of discussion, the freedom of writing, printing, and publishing."

Another act of the Administration, which ruffled his bucolic repose, sprang from disturbances among the unruly inhabitants of western Pennsylvania, who had rebelled against Hamilton's excise law. No less than 15,000 militiamen were requisitioned from the governors of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia at great expense to put down what was described as an insurrection, but which Jefferson thought was no more than riotous demonstrations against an unpopular impost. Evidently repressive measures were in fashion. But Jefferson did not despair. "The time is coming," he wrote to Madison (December 28), "when we shall fetch up the leeway of our vessel." The Republican majority in the House of Representatives was growing; his only fear was that Madison might follow his own example of retirement, before 'the Augean herd' was purged of its impurities. "Hold on then, my dear friend, that we may not shipwreck in the meanwhile. I do not see, in the minds of those with whom I converse, a greater affliction than the fear of your retirement. But this must not be, unless to a more splendid, and a more efficacious post. There I should rejoice to see you. I have long had much in my mind to say to you

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on that subject." He meant that Madison should be Republican candidate for the presidency, and added in reference to another suggestion, which was appearing in the newspapers: "I would not give up my own retirement for the empire of the universe."

Correspondence with Madison on this subject was resumed a few months later. Republican sentiment had already crowned Jefferson President, and it was represented to him that his refusal of office should not and could not apply to that of Chief Magistrate. But Jefferson replied that his retirement meant from all office high or low, without exception. When he was Secretary of State, Federalist newspapers had forced him to consider the matter by constantly insinuating that he was relinquishing one office only in order to scheme for another and higher one. The idea being thus presented "my own quiet required that I should face it and examine it." He did so 'thoroughly,' and decided that his reasons for retiring from office "operated more strongly against that which was insinuated to be my object." Since then his health had broken down; his private affairs required close attention; above all, the delights he felt in the society of his family and in agricultural pursuits had confirmed his resolution. "The little spice of ambition, that I had in my younger days, has long since evaporated." In stating these reasons he was not opening the door to future discussion; "the question is forever closed with me." His sole object was to prevent any division or loss of votes, which might be fatal to the republican interest. They must concentrate all their strength on one object. "Who this should be, is a question I can more freely discuss with anybody than yourself. In this I painfully feel the loss of Monroe." The President, in one of his last efforts to balance appoint-

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ments, had sent Monroe, a fervent Republican, as Minister to Paris, while Jay, the Chief Justice, an equally strong Federalist, went to London to angle for a commercial treaty which might restrain naval encroachments on American trade and obviate war with England.

The end of Washington's second term was approaching; and the question who should be Republican candidate when he retired must have been under discussion with Madison, Giles, and other prominent Republicans who visited Monticello during the year. Exactly how and when the Favourite was induced to enter for the race we do not know. In the spring, when Giles announced a visit, Jefferson told him that he would have to discuss farming. "I shall talk with you about it from morning till night, and put you on very short allowance as to political aliment." In August, 1795, he refused an invitation from Mann Page to attend a conference on education at Fredericksburg, although "if anything could ever induce me to sleep another night out of my own house it would have been your friendly invitation, and my solicitude for the subject of it, the education of our youth." He was most anxious that all the children of Virginia should learn enough to understand as citizens what was going on in the world and keep their own country right; for nothing could keep it right but their own vigilant and distrustful superintendence: "I do not believe with the Rochefoucaulds and Montaignes that fourteen men out of fifteen are rogues. I believe a great abatement from that proportion may be made in favour of general honesty." Unfortunately in government rogues were apt to be uppermost and to "nestle themselves into places of power and profit." They began by stealing the people's good opinions and then stole from them the right of withdrawing



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it, by contriving laws and associations against popular power.

Jay had just concluded a treaty with England which was thought to be extremely unfavourable and even humiliating to the United States. Jefferson at once denounced its terms. The Republicans raised a storm of protest, and meetings were held all over the country. Washington hesitated to ratify the treaty; but in the autumn Hamilton flew to its defence in a series of articles which appeared under two of his pseudonyms, Curtius and Camillus. On receiving copies Jefferson gave one or two by way of experiment, so he told Madison (September 21, 1795), to honest sound-hearted men of common understanding, and they were not able to parry the sophistry of Curtius:—

“I have ceased therefore to give them. Hamilton is really a colossus to the anti-republican party. Without numbers he is a host within himself. They [the Federalists] have got themselves into a defile, where they might be finished; but too much security on the republican part will give time to his talents and his indefatigableness to extricate them. We have had only middling performances to oppose to him. In truth, when he comes forward, there is nobody but yourself who can meet him. . . . For God’s sake, take up your pen and give a fundamental reply to Curtius and Camillus.”

This interesting letter shows that Hamilton and the President together had stemmed the outcry against the treaty, and that the merchants, who had at first joined in it, were returning to their party allegiance. In truth, though Jay’s diplomacy had not been clever, the treaty from a commercial point of view was much better than an embargo, and infinitely preferable to war. A constitutional controversy arose when the House of Representatives expressed their disapproval of the treaty. Jefferson thought they were right; but was glad that a proposed

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censure of the President was dropped, for Washington, he said, when he errs, "errs with integrity." Jefferson did not of course dispute that treaty-making belonged to the President and the Senate; but when a treaty was made involving matters confided to the three branches of the legislature conjointly, "the Representatives are as free as the President and Senate were to consider whether the national interest requires or forbids their giving the forms and force of law to the articles over which they have a power." The struggle over the Jay treaty, and republican criticisms of the President for his action in this matter, as well as for his denunciation of the democratic societies, helped to identify Washington more and more with the Federalist party; and this bias was strengthened by the fall of Edmund Randolph, who was found by an intercepted letter guilty of misconduct in his negotiations with the French Government. On reading the pamphlet which Randolph afterwards issued in his defence, Jefferson absolved him of corruption, but expressed little sympathy for a professed supporter who had often let him down in Washington's Cabinet. This affair and a letter of Washington's, which had reflected on the Republican friends of France as partisans of war and confusion, led Jefferson to anticipate the recall of Monroe from Paris. Monroe had got on famously for a time. He had been kissed by the President of the French Republic, and had procured Paine's release from prison. But the Jay treaty put an end to his popularity; troubles with France took the place of troubles with England; and in the following summer Jefferson's prediction was fulfilled. Monroe returned, and soon afterwards, smarting under the reproofs of Pickering, an acrid Hamiltonian, who had succeeded Randolph in the Department of State, published his case against the

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Administration in a formidable pamphlet of five hundred pages, which Jefferson pronounced 'unanswerable.'

Early in 1796, Jefferson, drawn back by irresistible forces into the political turmoil, began to direct the policy and tactics of the Republican party. A letter to Madison in March deals with public finance. Hamilton's object, he says, from the beginning was to throw it into forms which should be utterly undecipherable. He was never able to give a clear view of the debt, or whether it was being diminished or increased. Jefferson thought it had been increased at the rate of about a million dollars annually during Washington's first administration. Hamilton had resigned at the beginning of the year; but the muddle remained:—

"If Mr. Gallatin would undertake to reduce this chaos to order, present us with a clear view of our finances, and put them into a form as simple as they will admit, he will merit immortal honour. The accounts of the United States ought to be, and may be made, as simple as those of a common farmer, and capable of being understood by common farmers."

The modern farmer, in England at any rate, is celebrated for not keeping any accounts at all. But whether Jefferson overrated the intelligence of the common farmer or not, his object was a good one from the public point of view, and full of party wisdom. A party without clear and sound financial principles is only half-baked. In hitting upon Gallatin to carry out his policy Jefferson showed remarkable discernment. Gallatin mastered every department of public finance; he cleared up the mysteries in which Hamilton had wrapped it, and was to prove himself as Jefferson's right-hand man at the Treasury a ruthless foe of extravagance and a true friend of the American taxpayer. It is a curious fact that the two most

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celebrated secretaries of the United States Treasury were both aliens; for Hamilton was born in the British West Indies, and Gallatin in Switzerland. Jefferson was well aware that a party which was to advocate a reduction of taxation must not get itself mixed up with projects of new expenditure; accordingly in this same letter we find him advising Madison not to proceed with some proposals he had put forward for federal expenditure on post roads. He thought that such proposals would be a source of boundless patronage to the executive and a bottomless abyss for public money. It would lead to jobbing among Congressmen, and a scramble as to who could get the most money wasted in his own State.

A few days later Jefferson despatched another suggestion to his party in Congress, this time to W. B. Giles, a doughty debater, who had been a thorn in Hamilton's side:—

“We are in suspense here,” he wrote, “to see the fate of Mr. Pitt's Bill against democratic societies. I wish extremely to get the true history of this effort to suppress freedom of meeting, speaking, writing and printing. Your acquaintance with Sedgwick will enable you to do it. Pray get the outlines of the Bill he intended to have brought in for this purpose. This will enable us to judge whether we have the merit of the invention, whether we were really beforehand with the British minister on this subject; whether he took his hint from our proposition or whether the concurrence in the sentiment is merely the result of the general truth that great men will think alike and act alike, though without intercommunication.”

Jefferson's humour was often of the genus sardonicum.

A republican suggestion that American merchantmen should be armed to resist impressment did not meet with his approval. As an alternative he suggested that they might lay a duty of a penny a yard on British osnaburgs

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and expend the proceeds in employing agents to extricate American seamen from British service.

Henceforward Jefferson's correspondence is mainly political; but we learn from the letter to Giles that he was busy with architecture. He had begun the demolition of his house, and he hoped (with his usual optimism) to get through its 're-edification' in the course of the summer.

Three months later Jefferson had two French visitors. The first was the Comte de Volney, author of the then famous *Ruins of Empire*, a hot Republican, who had been thrown into prison by Robespierre. Volney was followed by the Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, a liberal-minded Aristocrat, who had fled from Marat's proscriptions. Rochefoucauld arrived at Monticello on June 22, and stayed for a week. He has left us an interesting account of his visit in a volume of travels: —

"The house," he wrote, "stands on the summit of the mountain, and the taste and arts of Europe have been consulted in the formation of its plan. Mr. Jefferson had commenced its construction before the American revolution; since that epoch his life has been constantly engaged in public affairs, and he has been unable to complete the execution of his whole design. The finished part of the building has suffered from the suspension of the work; and Mr. Jefferson, who two years ago resumed the habits and leisure of private life, is now continuing his original plan and even improving on it. He intends that the building shall consist of only one storey crowned with balustrades. A dome is to be constructed in the centre."

Rochefoucauld declares that even the first Monticello was infinitely superior to all other American houses in point of taste and convenience. But at his first essay Jefferson had only studied art and architecture in books. His travels in Europe had since supplied him with models, "and his new plan, the execution of which is already much advanced, will be accomplished before the end of next

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year, when his house will certainly deserve to be ranked with the most pleasant mansions in France and England." The Frenchman was taken over the farm and initiated into Jefferson's theories of agriculture and system of rotation. Jefferson, it appears, was mathematically precise in all his operations. He divided all his cultivated land into four farms of equal size, with seven fields of forty acres apiece. Each farm was under a separate bailiff, who employed on it four negroes, four negresses, four oxen, and four horses. Jefferson showed his guest a wonderful threshing machine invented in Scotland. It weighed less than two thousand pounds, could be conveyed from one farm to another in a wagon, and could thrash over 120 bushels a day. He also showed him the white weevil, which deposited its eggs in the ears of the grain and made it necessary to thrash the corn immediately after harvest. At this time Jefferson sold his wheat to merchants at Milton or Charlottesville, who shipped it to Richmond. Money was very scarce in the district and bank notes were unknown, trade being carried on chiefly by barter.

Rochefoucauld found his host of an easy and obliging temper. His conversation was most agreeable, and his stock of information unsurpassed. There was no sign of politics. When he arrived, Jefferson was hard at work directing the harvesting operations, undeterred by the scorching heat of the sun. It is pleasant to record the traveller's impression of the slaves on the estate. They were fed, clothed, and treated as well as white servants could be. Practically everything was made on the farm. Among the slaves were not only agricultural labourers but cabinet makers, carpenters, bricklayers, masons, and smiths. Some of the black children were employed in a nail factory, and some of the

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negresses in spinning. Their master animated them by rewards and distinctions. "In fine, his superior mind directs the management of his domestic concerns with the same ability, activity, and regularity which he evinced in the conduct of public affairs. In superintending his household he is assisted by his two daughters, handsome, modest, and amiable women, who had been educated in France." Of the younger he prophesied that "as she is seventeen years old, and remarkably handsome, she will doubtless soon find that there are duties which it is still sweeter to perform than those of a daughter." We could wish that this lively and observant Frenchman had kept some record of their talks on men and books. He has little more to tell us of his host's encyclopædic knowledge and polished learning than that in Europe he would hold a distinguished rank among men of letters.

At this time Jefferson felt that Washington's influence was overwhelming, and that the people were supporting the President's judgment against their own. Republicanism, therefore, must lie on its oars, and republicans must resign the vessel of state to its pilot so long as he remained on board. Shortly before this, on April 24, Jefferson had written to an Italian friend, Philip Mazzei, in the course of a letter on private matters, a brief but pungent account of the political situation in the United States. It attained, as we shall see, shortly afterwards great notoriety, and is still quoted along with some passages in the *Ana* by Jefferson's detractors to show how grossly Jefferson exaggerated the designs of leading Federalists. The passage which was to give so much offence ran (in part) as follows :

"The aspect of our politics has wonderfully changed since you left us. In place of that noble love of liberty and republican government

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which carried us triumphantly through the war, an Anglican, monarchical, aristocratical party has sprung up, whose avowed object is to draw over us the substance, as they have already done the forms, of the British Government. The main body of our citizens however remain true to their republican principles; the whole landed interest is republican and so is a great mass of talents. Against us are the Executive, the Judiciary, two out of three branches of the legislature, all the officers of the government, all who want to be officers, all timid men who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty, British merchants and Americans trading on British capital, speculators and holders in the banks and public funds. . . . In short we are likely to preserve the liberty we have obtained only by unremitting labours and perils, but we shall preserve it. . . . We have only to awake and snap the Lilliputian cords with which they have been entangling us during the first sleep which succeeded our labours."

In July, 1796, a scientific acquaintance asked Jefferson to present to the Philosophical Society the results of his researches since his retirement from office. "But my good Sir," replied Jefferson, "I have made researches into nothing but what is connected with agriculture. In this way I have a little matter to communicate and will do it ere long. It is the form of a mould-board *of least resistance*. I had some years ago conceived the principles of it, and I explained them to Mr. Rittenhouse. I have since reduced the thing to practice, and have reason to believe the theory fully confirmed." This was Jefferson's improved plough, the most useful perhaps of his many ingenious inventions. In the same letter he mentioned with indignation some "blasphemies lately vended<sup>1</sup> against the memory of the father of American philosophy." But Franklin's fame, he says, will be preserved and venerated "as long as the thunder of heaven shall be heard or feared" — evidently an allusion to Turgot's fine Latin epigram on Franklin: —

<sup>1</sup> Probably by Cobbett in Porcupine's Gazette.



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*Eripuit caelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis.*<sup>1</sup>

A letter of July 10 to Monroe, who was about to leave Paris in high dudgeon, gives us another glimpse of the political situation.

"The campaign of congress has closed. Though the Anglomen have in the end got their treaty through, and so far have triumphed over the cause of republicanism, yet it has been to them a dear bought victory. It has given the most radical shock to their party which it has ever received. . . . They see that nothing can support them but the colossus of the President's merits with the people, and the moment he retires that his successor if a monocrat will be over-borne by the republican sense of his constituents; if a republican he will of course give fair play to that sense, and lead things into the channel of harmony between the governors and governed. In the meantime patience."

As to the tactics of the Federalists, he notes that most assiduous court has been paid to Patrick Henry. "He has been offered everything which they knew he would not accept. . . . If they thought they could count upon him, they would run him for their Vice president, their first object being to produce a schism in this state. As it is, they will run Mr. Pinckney, in which they regard his southern position rather than his principles. Mr. Jay and his advocate Camillus<sup>2</sup> are completely treaty-foundered."

After this there is a gap in the correspondence, only broken in November by a letter to Colonel John Stuart, who had discovered the bones of an antediluvian monster and had forwarded its great claw to Monticello. But the thigh bone, on which Jefferson had eagerly counted, was nowhere to be found. With the help of the thigh bone he would have possessed "a whole limb from the

<sup>1</sup> "He has wrenched the thunder-bolt from heaven and the sceptre from tyrants."

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Hamilton.

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haunch bone to the claw inclusive” and would have been able to fix the stature of the animal without going into conjectural calculations. On the strength of the claw however Jefferson promises to make a communication to the Philosophical Society, with a proper notification of the services rendered to the world by the person who had rescued these extraordinary remains. He had great hopes that a live specimen of this animal, as well as of the mammoth, might yet be discovered. “The annihilation of any species of existence,” he remarked, “is so unexampled in any parts of the economy of nature which we see, that we have a right to conclude as to the parts we do not see that the probabilities against such annihilation are stronger than those for it.”

For an account of Jefferson’s return to active politics as republican standard bearer we may turn to the official life of Jefferson. The Republican party, says Randall, would not have Madison. They insisted on Jefferson. “When the subject began to be generally mooted, it became speedily apparent that the decided preferences of that party all pointed to Mr. Jefferson — indeed that no other man was or would be thought of as its candidate. By the middle of summer [1796] he was its universally understood nominee, in case General Washington should decline a re-election.” In the celebrated Farewell Address, published in September, Washington announced his retirement. The Federalists had more difficulty in choosing their leader. Hamilton was quite out of the running; but he had enough influence to make it uncertain for a time whether John Adams would secure the nomination. There was a little more freedom, or a little less discipline, then than now among the electors to whom the voters entrusted the choice of President and Vice President. At

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that time also, it should be noted, the votes for President and Vice President were not cast separately. The candidate who received the largest number of votes was elected President, and the candidate who came next Vice President. Eventually the Federalists chose Adams and Thomas Pinckney, while Jefferson and Aaron Burr (then known as an astute Republican organiser in New York) were the Republican nominees. It was a very close contest between Adams and Jefferson. In fact it may almost be said that Adams only won by a fluke, or as Hamilton put it, by a miracle; for he received one vote from Pennsylvania, one from Virginia, and one from North Carolina. Otherwise the result was perfectly geographical. Apart from these three votes Jefferson had all those of the south and of Pennsylvania, while Adams had the solid north and seven votes from Maryland. If Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina had not given these three eccentric votes to John Adams contrary to all expectation, Jefferson would have been elected President and Adams Vice President. As it was, the votes stood for Adams 71, for Jefferson 68, for Pinckney 59, for Burr 30. Samuel Adams received 15, Oliver Ellsworth 11, George Clinton 7, and Jay 5. Pinckney's small vote is accounted for by a suspicion among the New England Federalists that Hamilton had arranged to put Pinckney above Adams; consequently some of the New England electors gave Ellsworth the second place on their tickets. Each elector wrote two names on his ballot paper, and although one was usually intended for President and the other for Vice President, yet it was the candidate whose name appeared most frequently who became President.

On December 17, before the victory of Adams was certain, Jefferson wrote to Madison: "the first wish of

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my heart was that you should have been proposed for the administration of the government. On your declining it I wish anybody rather than myself." To Rutledge a few days later he explained that his name had been brought forward without concert on his part, and that he would rejoice at escaping: "I have no ambition to govern men, no passion which would lead me to delight to ride in a storm." When it seemed possible that there would be a tie between himself and Adams, he authorised Madison "to solicit on my behalf that Mr. Adams may be preferred." From the commencement of their public life Adams had always been his senior, and if the public vote were equal, that circumstance ought to give him the preference. When the result was almost but not quite certain, Jefferson wrote a very friendly letter of congratulations to Adams on the assumption that he would be elected, though "it is possible you may be cheated of your succession by a trick worthy the subtlety of your arch-friend of New York." "I devoutly wish," he added, "you may be able to shun for us this war, by which our agriculture, commerce, and credit will be destroyed. If you are, the glory will be all your own; and that your administration may be filled with glory and happiness to yourself and advantage to us is the sincere wish of one who, though in the course of our voyage through life various little incidents have happened or been contrived to separate us, retains still for you the solid esteem of the moments when we were working for our independence, and sentiments of respect and affectionate attachment."

This letter he enclosed, unsealed, in another to Madison, who was to deliver it or not to the President elect at his discretion. In the letter to Madison, which was written on January 1 after hearing the final results, he says he

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cannot decide whether he would prefer the Vice Presidency to private life. As regards the enclosure he remarks: "If Mr. Adams can be induced to administer the government on its true principles, and to relinquish his bias for an English constitution, it is to be considered whether it would not be on the whole for the public good to come to a good understanding with him as to his future elections. He is perhaps the only sure barrier against Hamilton's getting in." Madison replied from Philadelphia (January 15) that on consideration he had suspended the delivery of this letter for six reasons, the last of which — "the probability that Mr. A.'s course of Administration may force an opposition to it from the republican quarter" — was perhaps sufficient. In such matters as this Madison was a shrewd counsellor, and we cannot wonder that Jefferson put so much confidence in his discretion. More than a year after Jefferson's death, when Trist was on a visit to Montpelier, Madison found this letter among his papers, and read it over. When he came to "the only sure barrier," the old man shook his head and said, "Hamilton never could have got in."

## CHAPTER II

### REPUBLICANISM AT BAY

#### JEFFERSON'S VICE PRESIDENCY—1797 TO 1801

"President Adams seemed determined to establish a strong government tending to monarchical powers and by means of severe enactments to prostrate the free expression of popular opinion."

—From John Wood's *Suppressed History of the Administration of John Adams* (1846)

THIS chapter would be a very short one if Jefferson's political activities during the four years of his Vice Presidency had been confined to his official functions as Chairman of the Senate. At first it looked as if he might play a part as confidential advisor to President Adams on important matters, especially those affecting foreign policy. Indeed it is clear from notes left by both Adams and Jefferson on the subject that Adams began with this idea. But after meeting the Cabinet Ministers (all Hamiltonians whom he had taken over from Washington) Adams was diverted from his intention of steering with Jefferson's help a middle course, and allowed the ship to sail on under the Federalist flag. Consequently Jefferson dropped his own notion that the Republicans might make terms with Adams, and from this moment it was certain that he would have to be Republican candidate for the Presidency at the next contest. Meanwhile, throwing himself with characteristic energy into his official duties as Chairman of the Senate, he wrote to Wythe

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and other friends to help him with their notes and observations on parliamentary procedure, about which he felt 'rusty.' If there is a subject with which a competent man is not thoroughly acquainted, there is no better way of mastering it than writing a book. Jefferson, accordingly, aided by the precedents of Hatsel and anticipating Ilbert, prepared a Manual of Parliamentary Practice, which is still recognised as an admirable contribution to a dry but not unimportant branch of government. The basis on which he worked was a parliamentary pocketbook compiled for his own edification when he was studying law at Williamsburg.<sup>1</sup>

Freed by the President's action from all part in the public policy of the Administration, Jefferson watched from his official chair in the Senate with critical, suspicious, and often hostile eyes the measures which John Adams and his not very loyal colleagues adopted during four anxious and eventful years.

Far from regretting, he rejoiced at, his narrow escape from power. "Flumina amo sylvasque inglorius," he wrote to a friend. "The newspapers will permit me to plant my corn, peas, etc. in hills or drills as I please (and my oranges by-the-bye when you send them), while our eastern friend will be struggling with the storm which is gathering over us; perhaps be shipwrecked in it. This is certainly not a moment to covet the helm."

In another letter (to Dr. Benjamin Rush) he dwells complacently on 'the tranquil and unoffending station' which

<sup>1</sup> At the end of his Vice Presidency Jefferson deposited his manual in manuscript with the Senate. It was printed and became the recognised guide for public bodies in the United States. The Manual is conveniently divided into sections, each rule or observation being followed by a reference to Hatsel or some other authority. For the whole subject see Josef Redlich's *The Procedure of the House of Commons*. 3 vols., London, 1908.

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will give him "philosophical evenings in the winter and rural days in the summer." His interest in the bones of the antediluvian monster continued. In January he still thought it was a lion, three or four times larger than the ordinary. Later on he informs its discoverer that the Philosophical Society has named it the *Megalonyx*, and compares it with a skeleton found in Paraguay, which was classed not with lions but with sloths and anteaters. But on questioning Indians "we have received some of their traditions, which confirm his classification with the lion."

But though Jefferson found recreation in this and other hobbies, he was soon forced to add the duties of leader of the opposition to his official functions. To estimate his difficulties we must understand the conditions. To appreciate the skill of the pilot, we must measure the strength of the currents and the fury of the storm which had to be encountered before the republican ship came safe to port.

It needs a strong effort of the historical imagination to reproduce the atmosphere of American politics and the sharp but shifting issues which divided and subdivided American parties in the closing years of the eighteenth century. After the Federal Constitution was set going under Washington, differences had arisen about its interpretation. Some were for giving the central government the maximum of power consistent with the local administration of their affairs by the separate states; some wished to restrict Federal activities to foreign policy, defence, and other powers enumerated in the Constitution. Gradually the former coalesced in a party called Federalist under the leadership of Hamilton, while the latter, gathering round Jefferson and Madison, became known as



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Republicans. It was the French Revolution however that turned these embryo groups into parties, and made non-party government impossible. Passion surged up until leaders who had been on good terms would hardly speak to one another. The friends of order became the friends of force. Liberty was derided as licence. Property began to fear the people. In some parts of the country disunion and even civil war were not far off. A traveller who visited America during the Adams administration said he could find few Americans; most of the people seemed to be either English or French. Jefferson said that political opponents in those days could not separate the business of the state from that of society. He complained that men who had been intimate all their lives would cross the street to avoid meeting, or turn their heads away lest they should be obliged to touch their hats. Until the execution of Louis brought on war between France and England, a great majority of the American people naturally cherished warm feelings of affection and gratitude for the French whose interposition had helped to win the War of Independence. Lafayette and many of the French officers had been immensely popular in society; from Washington downwards no American would have dreamed of war with France. Towards Great Britain resentment lingered; but it was being softened by time and trade, especially among the mercantile classes, whose prosperity depended so largely on British markets. But when, attacked by foreign enemies, the French republicans plunged into excesses, half America embraced the French cause as the cause of democracy and freedom, hoping and believing that the autocrats of Austria and Prussia, and the oligarchy of England would be repulsed and that republican institutions would spread over Europe. The

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other half, when they beheld Lafayette and many good liberals in exile, and read of the Reign of Terror and the Goddess of Reason, saw only irreligion, profligacy, anarchy, and a new despotism worse than the old. For them unreformed England became more and more the embodiment of law and order, a strong government not insensible to popular opinion, but secure against popular passion, an aristocratic model towards which the American constitution might well look rather than in the direction of French Jacobinism. They began to prefer Edmund Burke to Tom Paine and to fear Equality more than they loved Liberty.

It is but just to say that most of the responsible leaders on both sides were anxious to avoid war with either England or France. But the pressure on Adams from Hamilton's men to make an alliance with England and to provoke or declare war on France was at times severe, and might have been irresistible but for the strenuous resistance offered by the Republicans in Congress. Jefferson indeed laboured hard and successfully, not only to keep his country out of the European war but to make the Republican party the peace party. It will be remembered that the first danger, after England came into the war, was that the United States might join France. When that danger was averted by the Jay treaty, the French Directory, elated by a series of victories over the Allies, felt strong enough to show its resentment against the American government and issued decrees against neutral commerce which enabled French privateers to prey upon American ships and cargoes. Things stood thus when Adams took office. His first step was to call Congress together, a step which Jefferson regretted because, as he said, the Administration, if it wished for peace, could take the

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necessary steps without calling Congress, whereas if it wished to prepare for war and to take warlike measures the convening of Congress was essential. Congress accordingly was summoned for May 15. Two days earlier Jefferson despatched from Philadelphia a remarkable survey of the political situation to his friend Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts. Gerry, a moderate Republican, was friendly to John Adams, and Jefferson was at pains to explain that he too had a high esteem for Adams, and had been well pleased when he gained the Presidency. In fact there was not a moment from his first acquiescence in his own candidature when he did not "devoutly pray that the very thing might happen which has happened. The second office of the government is honourable and easy, the first is but a splendid misery." Gerry had expressed apprehension that stratagems would be employed to cause a misunderstanding between the President and the Vice President. Jefferson agreed, and added: "These machinations will proceed from the Hamiltonians by whom he is surrounded, and who are only a little less hostile to him than to me. It cannot but damp the pleasure of cordiality, when we suspect that it is suspected." Jefferson doubted his power to remove these suspicions. The Hamiltonians feared his influence on the executive councils; "but when they shall know that I consider my office as constitutionally confined to legislative functions . . . their fears may perhaps subside." He heartily echoed Gerry's wish that the United States could take its stand on a ground perfectly neutral and independent towards all nations. That had been his constant object through public life. If it had not been for the failure of the Bank of England — he referred to the recent suspension of specie payments — the Federal printing presses

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would already have drawn them into a war on the side of England, and some of their newspapers were even ready to break up the Union. That would be the end of the tragedy.

But "whatever follies we may be led into as to foreign nations" Jefferson hoped and believed that "we shall never give up our Union, the last anchor of our hope, and that alone which is to prevent this heavenly country from becoming an arena of gladiators. Much as I abhor war, and view it as the greatest scourge of mankind, and anxiously as I wish to keep out of the broils of Europe, I would yet go with my brethren into these rather than separate from them." To keep America apart from Europe he almost joined in the wish of Silas Deane that there were an ocean of fire between the old world and the new. A month later he wrote "with infinite joy" to congratulate Gerry on his appointment with Pinckney and John Marshall as Envoy Extraordinary to the French Republic, and conjured him to accept the mission, in order that it might be sealed with the confidence of all parties and ensure a peaceful disposition in the negotiations. The European War, he thought, was likely to end in another year. That was one good reason for not being embroiled. Another was that "our countrymen have divided themselves by such strong affections to the French and the English that nothing will secure us internally but a divorce from both nations." There was good reason for anxiety. President Adams's speech to Congress had inflamed resentment against France; and though news of French victories and of the mutiny at the Nore had cooled the war party, a report was current that the French Directory contemplated war on the United States. The Council of Ancients however rejected the proposal, and when

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Congress adjourned in the summer, war seemed more remote. Jefferson thought that the peace with Austria and the insurrection in Ireland had helped to restrain Federalist chauvinism. The two parties in debate had charged each other with inconsistency, he said, and with being governed by attachment to a foreign country rather than by "reason and pure Americanism"; but he claimed that the Republicans had remained consistent advocates of peace, while most of the Federalists had voted for war measures, war preparations, and an increase of the debt to provide for frigates, fortifications, and additions to the army.

August found him back at Monticello. His letter to Mazzei had found its way from Paris into the Federalist newspapers and was causing a mighty stir. In the process of translation from English to Italian, from Italian into French, and from French back into English the diction had been varied and in one place the substance falsified. Should he issue a correct version? If he did, the correction would involve a criticism of birthday celebrations, levees, processions "and other pomposities" which might have brought on a personal difference with Washington. On the whole therefore he thought it best to remain silent; but he was anxious to consult with his friends, and sent Madison an earnest exhortation to come with Monroe to Monticello for the purpose.

The new year began better politically than commercially. On January 3, 1798, Jefferson wrote from Philadelphia to Madison: "The bankruptcies here continue. The prison is full of the most reputable merchants. . . . Prices have fallen greatly. . . . Money is scarce beyond all example." The Republican Party however was gaining ground in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Eng-

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land. At this time the general spirit of the merchants was becoming more peaceful, and Jefferson began to hope that they would "rub through" without war. One of his letters discusses the projected French invasion of England. Her subjugation, he says, would be a general calamity; but happily that was impossible. Her republicanism would be a blessing, though he did not wish to see a form of government forced upon any nation.

In March bad news came from France. A French decree had been issued against neutral shipping. American shipowners and merchants were indignant. New proposals for armaments were brought forward. The President again adopted a warlike tone, on learning that the American envoys in Paris had failed to establish peaceful relations with France. They had even been approached by persons representing themselves as agents of Talleyrand with the barefaced suggestion that a large bribe should be distributed among members of the Directory to facilitate negotiations. On their refusal Pinckney and Marshall were dismissed, but Gerry was persuaded to remain. Early in April the Senate voted to publish the despatches; and this was done, the names of 'Talleyrand's brokers,' as the obscure agents were called, being disguised by the letters X. Y. Z. A universal outcry of patriotic indignation followed from all parts of the Union. "Millions for defence but not a cent for tribute" was the slogan; and the President interpreting the national spirit in a message of June 21st declared that he would "never send another Minister to France without assurances that he would be received, respected, and honoured as the representative of a great, free, powerful and independent nation." For a moment party lines seemed to be almost obliterated. Many republicans joined in the demand for

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strong measures to vindicate the national honour. The administration of John Adams was lifted to a dizzy height of popularity, only to lose favour by an equally amazing abuse of the power with which it was invested by the momentary passions of an inflamed public opinion. Instead of declaring war the Administration determined to seize the opportunity of stamping on Republicanism at home. Their first proposal was to extinguish by deportation French propagandists like Volney, English "infidels" like Priestley, and some Irish agitators who were endeavouring to obtain American sympathy for the rebellion of '98. Accordingly the Alien Act was passed in June, and in the following month to curb the licentiousness of the press, that is to say of the Opposition press, Congress was induced to pass the Sedition Act.

The Alien Law authorised the President to order any alien whom he judged dangerous to peace and liberty to depart from the United States, and imposed fines and imprisonment on those who refused to obey the order. Volney and a number of other foreigners, who were obnoxious to the government, made haste to leave before the passing of the Act; but after it came into operation it was practically a dead letter. The Sedition Law was much more formidable to the opponents of the government. It inflicted heavy fines and imprisonments on any who should combine or conspire to oppose government measures, or should utter any false, scandalous, or malicious writing against the government, the Congress, or the President of the United States. It was to remain in force till March 3, 1801. Two days after passing this statute — on July 16, 1798 — Congress adjourned.

As the first Amendment to the Constitution (inspired by Jefferson) had prohibited Congress from passing any

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law to abridge freedom of speech or writing, the Sedition Act was on the face of it unconstitutional; but such was the state of public feeling that the more violent a measure the greater was its popularity; and prudent men felt they must bend if they were not to be broken by the storm. In war time we are familiar with the psychology that induces a government to direct half its energies to the persecution of a recalcitrant minority. The censorship of the press, the brow-beating of opinion, the persecution of Quakers and other conscientious objectors, and above all the suppression of inconvenient criticisms however true — and the greater the truth the greater the inconvenience — are all part and parcel in democratic countries of what is called the National Effort in War Time. To disseminate useful falsehoods for the winning of a war and to suppress inopportune truth certainly requires extraordinary measures; but in this case the Federalists had no such justification. They were not at war. There was no danger of invasion. It was to prepare for winning elections rather than war, that they resolved to muzzle their opponents and deprive them of their constitutional rights. Certainly they acted as if this were their object. Republican editors and writers were fined and imprisoned, and men were haled before the courts to be prosecuted for chance remarks and derogatory comments on the President and the government with a zeal which would have done credit to Spanish Inquisitors. This chapter of history was dubbed by John Randolph of Roanoke 'The American Reign of Terror.'

Jefferson's practised eye saw the danger at the end of March. The question of war and peace, he wrote, "depends now on a toss of cross and pile. If we could but gain this season we should be saved." An attempt had



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been made to get the Quakers to come forward with a petition "to aid with the weight of their body the feeble band of peace," but only a few would sign. Their attachment to England was stronger than their peace principles. Luckily the House of Representatives was pretty equally divided between war and peace, and even when the X. Y. Z. letters became known the government, as we have seen, preferred war preparations and the persecution of opinion to a declaration of hostilities.

Jefferson wrote to tell Madison that the war party intended to pass not only an Alien Bill and a Sedition Bill but a Bill for modifying the law of Citizenship which would be aimed at Gallatin. The object of the Sedition Bill would be the suppression of the Whig presses, and especially those of Bache and Carey. "If these papers fall, republicanism will be entirely brow-beaten." War addresses were 'showering' in from New Jersey and the great trading towns. . . . "The War Hawks talk of septembrisng, deportation, and the examples for quelling sedition set by the French executive. All the firmness of the human mind is now in a state of requisition." Those were indeed dark days; but thanks to Jefferson's prudence, patience, foresight, cool courage, and matchless fortitude the Republican party survived the ordeal. At the height of the excitement in May he is willing to excuse the multitude for acting on the impulse of the moment, but not the language used by the President, who in reply to patriotic addresses, was hurling threats not only against France but against his own fellow citizens. The Republican leader preached patience to his followers. There was no reason for despair. The war ardour would be cooled by the war taxes. Already the House of Representatives was whittling away some of the worst provisions of an army

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bill. Meanwhile to be peaceful was to be persecuted. Jefferson was receiving daily proofs of party spite and rancour from people who never saw him nor knew anything of him but through Porcupine<sup>1</sup> and Fenno. When passions are boiling over, anyone, he said, who keeps cool and clear of the contagion "is so far below the point of ordinary conversation, that he finds himself insulated in every society. However the fever will not last." Taxation would bring on reflection, and reflection with information would enable their countrymen to recover; for they were essentially republican. He implores Madison to return to the public theatre and to take an independent stand in the House of Representatives. Meanwhile something very like an informal state of war had supervened. At the end of May a bill was passed to authorise the capture of French armed vessels found hovering on the American coast. The President publicly declared that he would not unbrace a single nerve for any treaty France could offer.

At this time John Taylor, a well-known Republican writer, thought the time had come "to estimate the separate mass of Virginia and North Carolina with a view to their separate existence." To this proposition Jefferson administered soothing discouragement. It was true, he said, that for the moment Massachusetts and Connecticut were in the saddle "and that they ride us very hard, cruelly insulting our feelings." It was true too that those who had got the ascendancy possessed immense means for retaining their advantage. But the present situation was not a natural one. Though the government was in

<sup>1</sup> Porcupine's *Gazette* was run by William Cobbett with the assistance of Hamilton and other Federalists who were working for an alliance with the British monarchy.

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anti-republican hands, time would bring round a different order of things. Besides, "in every free and deliberating society, there must, from the nature of man, be opposite parties, and violent dissensions and discords. . . . Perhaps this party division is necessary to induce each to watch and delate to the people the proceedings of the other. But if on a temporary superiority of the one party, the other is to resort to a scission of the Union, no federal government can ever exist." If the Union were broken, there would still be passions and discords and parties in its fragments. Therefore let them not break away from their New England associates, whose "perversity of character" was well fitted to constitute a natural division of parties.

"A little patience, and we shall see the reign of witches pass over, their spells dissolved, and the people recovering their true sight, restoring their government to its true principles. . . . Who can say what would be the evils of a scission, and when and where they would end? Better keep together as we are, haul off from Europe as soon as we can, and from all attachments to any portions of it. . . . If the game runs sometimes against us at home, we must have patience till luck turns, and then we shall have an opportunity of winning back the *principles* we have lost. For this is a game where principles are at stake."

In June Jefferson got into very hot water; for his friend Dr. Logan had sailed for Hamburg on a private peace mission, of which unwisely he made a mystery. The War Hawks seized upon Logan's disappearance without notice, and declared that there was a traitorous correspondence between American Jacobins and the French Directory.<sup>1</sup> Their libelists set to work. "Porcupine gave me a principal share in it, as I am told, for I never read his papers." At this time, June 21, Congress was prepar-

<sup>1</sup>On his return Logan saw the President and helped Gerry to persuade him that the French government really wanted peace with America.

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ing to adjourn. This would be "withdrawing the fire from under a boiling pot."

At this critical moment Jefferson, before leaving Philadelphia for Monticello, found time as President of the Philosophical Society to write a letter to a Kentucky naturalist on the subject of herds of wild horses which were said to exist west of the Mississippi. The Society hoped to add a chapter to the history of the horse, of which very little was known, and he begged therefore for particulars of "the manners, habits and laws of his existence which are peculiar to his wild state." After his return to Monticello the Federalist newspapers continued to pelt Jefferson with defamatory missiles. One of his friends sent him in August a newspaper cutting describing how Republican journalists had been 'closeted' with Jefferson at various times during the Session. Jefferson replied with some humour that every one who came to see him in his public room might be said to have been closeted with him. In this sense it was true he had received visits from writers "friendly to liberty and our present form of government," like Bache, Franklin's grandson, and others whose visits the government spies might remember better than he did. But he did not propose to take action in reply to misstatements in the press. "At a very early period of my life I determined never to put a sentence into any newspaper. I have religiously adhered to the resolution through my life, and have great reason to be contented with it. Were I to undertake to answer the calumnies of the newspapers, it would be more than all my own time, and that of twenty aids could effect. For while I should be answering one, twenty new ones would be invented."

In the following month he wrote to an Irish rebel, A. H.

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Rowan, who had found refuge in the United States and was now endangered by the Alien Act, that he would find a safe asylum in Virginia, where "the laws of the land, administered by upright judges, would protect you from any exercise of power unauthorised by the Constitution of the United States. The Habeas Corpus secures every man here, alien or citizen, against everything which is not law, whatever shape it may assume." Here we have a clear intimation of Jefferson's doctrine, accepted by the whole republican party, that the Alien and Sedition Laws were not laws but a nullity, made void and of no effect by the Constitution. He was now taking measures at Monticello with his friends for a decisive demonstration of this view. The two brothers, George Nicholas of Kentucky, and Wilson C. Nicholas of Virginia, came to Monticello in October to deliberate on the situation and to devise a plan for safeguarding the liberties guaranteed by the Constitution. From these conferences emerged the famous Kentucky Resolutions drafted by Jefferson, and the Virginia Resolutions drafted by Madison. The secret of the authorship of the Kentucky Resolutions was religiously kept by the two brothers; but Jefferson in 1821 described the facts to George Nicholas's son, and two drafts of the Resolutions in his own hand were found among Jefferson's papers. Jefferson says he undertook to sketch out an energetic protest against the constitutionality of the Alien and Sedition Laws for introduction into the Kentucky Legislature on "a solemn assurance, which I strictly required, that it should not be known from what quarter they came." Some years afterwards Colonel Nicholas asked if the authorship might be made known, but Jefferson "pointedly enjoined that it should not." At first it was intended that the Resolutions should

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originate in North Carolina; but afterwards Kentucky was preferred, and they were introduced by George Nicholas. In preparing the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions Jefferson and Madison were in close communication. The temper and feelings which impelled Jefferson to take this decisive action find expression in a letter to S. T. Mason dated Monticello, October 11, 1798:—

“The X. Y. Z. fever has considerably abated through the country, as I am informed, and the Alien and Sedition laws are working hard. I fancy that some of the State legislatures will take strong ground on this occasion. For my own part I consider those laws as merely an experiment on the American mind, to see how far it will bear an avowed violation of the Constitution. If this goes down, we shall immediately see attempted another act of Congress, declaring that the President shall continue in office during life, reserving to another occasion the transfer of the succession of his heirs, and the establishment of the Senate for life.”

If this was the aim of the Oliverians, he added, Monk and the Cavaliers might be playing for the restoration of his most gracious Majesty George the Third.

A month later, November 17, he sent Madison a draft of the Kentucky Resolutions. These Resolutions, nine in number, were declaratory of the Constitution. The Union of the Federal States, they set forth, was by a compact, constituting a general government for special purposes with definite delegated powers reserving to each state the residuary mass of right to its own self-government. Hence whenever the general government assumed undelegated powers its acts were “unauthoritative, void, and of no force.”

Further, “as in all other cases of compact among parties having no common judge, each party has an equal right to judge for itself as well of infractions as of the mode and measure of redress.” After reciting the Constitutional

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amendment which expressly forbade Congress to make any law "abridging the freedom of speech or of the press," the third Resolution concluded that the Sedition Act "which does abridge the freedom of the press, is not law, but is altogether void and of no effect." The Fourth Resolution declared that Alien friends were under the jurisdiction and protection of the laws of the state wherein they resided; and as no power over them had been delegated to the United States, the Alien Act was also void. Finally the Governor of Kentucky was instructed to communicate the Resolutions to other State legislatures and to assure them that Kentucky was faithful to the Federal compact according to its plain intent and meaning; but it would not tamely submit to the undelegated and unlimited powers which would result from allowing the Alien and Sedition Acts to stand. Other states therefore were asked to concur in declaring the two acts void, and to unite with Kentucky in requesting their repeal at the next Session of Congress. The Resolutions were passed by the Kentucky legislature and signed by the Governor on November 16. The Virginia Resolutions, which followed in December, were to the same effect. They treated the Alien and Sedition Laws as a usurpation by the Central Government of powers which it did not possess; but they did not insist, as the Kentucky Resolutions had done, that each party must be judge of infractions and of redress. Jefferson's idea was, as he put it to Madison (November 17), that matters should be left in such a train that they should not be committed absolutely to push things to extremities and yet be free to push them as far as events rendered prudent.

He did not consider it safe to communicate much by letter, owing to 'the infidelities of the post office'; but we

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have a pretty full and confidential statement of his views to John Taylor, who was to present the Virginia Resolutions (November 26), and was inclined to go too far. Jefferson reminds him that many respectable citizens of Virginia were still in the X. Y. Z. stage. But it was only a disease of the imagination and would pass away, as the patients were essentially Republicans. "Indeed, the Doctor is now on his way to cure it, in the guise of a tax-gatherer. But give time for the medicine to work, and for the repetition of stronger doses which must be administered." The government had failed to provide for the expenses of the year. To borrow was difficult; to print paper money was perilous. Nothing then but more taxes could get them along, and these would carry reason and reflection to every man's door, particularly in the hour of election. A characteristic passage follows:—

"I wish it were possible to obtain a single amendment to our Constitution. I would be willing to depend on that alone for the reduction of the administration of our government to the genuine principles of its Constitution; I mean an additional article, taking from the federal government the power of borrowing. . . . I know that to pay all proper expenses within the year, would, in case of war, be hard on us. But not so hard as ten wars instead of one. For wars would be reduced in proportion. . . . For the present, I should be for resolving the alien and sedition laws to be against the Constitution and merely void, and for addressing the other States to obtain similar declarations; and I would not do anything at this moment which should commit us further, but reserve ourselves to shape our future measures, or no measures, by the events which may happen. It is a singular phenomenon, that while our State governments are the very *best in the world*, without exception or comparison, our General Government has, in the rapid course of nine or ten years, become more arbitrary, and has swallowed more of the public liberty than even that of England. I enclose you a column, cut out of a London paper, to show you that the English, though charmed with our making their enemies our enemies, yet blush and weep over our sedition law."



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Jefferson's correspondence shows that the labours of the Autumn were continued with tremendous energy in the new year. He arrived in Philadelphia on Christmas Day, and on January 3, 1799, wrote to tell Madison that Gerry's correspondence with Talleyrand when published would show France in a very conciliatory attitude. It was fortunate that Gerry had stayed behind; but though it was five months since his return, his transactions with the French Government after the departure of his colleagues were still being kept back in order, it seemed, to maintain the war excitement until a five million loan offering eight per cent interest had been subscribed. By this date (the middle of January) Jefferson, confident of a favourable change in public sentiment, was anxious that Madison should give it a decisive turn and justify their views of the constitution by publishing his Notes of the Debates during the Convention. Such a publication, he thought, would exercise a decisive influence, "and something is required from you as a set off against the sin of your retirement." Madison, it should be explained, had given up Congress to look after his private affairs; but he could not be prevailed upon to publish these notes, which indeed would have told very heavily against Hamilton.

A few days later Gerry's correspondence and Pickering's report appeared, showing, as Jefferson put it to Monroe, the willingness of the French government to negotiate, and the refusal of the American government to believe what they said. However, the X. Y. Z. delusion was wearing off, and the publication of Gerry's despatches would tend to open the eyes of the people. Other circumstances would strengthen these impressions—the Alien and Sedition Laws, the increase of armaments, the

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usurious loan, the prospect of additional taxes and of still heavier ones if war were forced on, and of "recruiting officers lounging at every court house and decoying the labourer from his plough." Fortunately the French "annihilated as they are on the ocean, cannot get at us for some time," even if the American government determined to open commerce with Toussaint and his black subjects in Hayti now in rebellion against France.

Poor Gerry was in a very disconsolate mood. The Federalists were angry with him for staying in France, and he had not gone far enough to win the praises of the Republicans. In vexation of spirit he wrote to Jefferson, who thereupon urged him to give full information to his fellow citizens, postponing motives of delicacy to those of duty. "Make your stand, he said, on the high ground of your own character." Better to disregard calumny and 'be borne above it on the shoulders of your grateful fellow citizens' than to sink into 'the humble oblivion to which the Federalists (self-called) have secretly condemned you.' To reassure his friend's doubts about the republican faith Jefferson set forth his zeal for the Constitution in the true sense in which it was adopted by the States, and sketched out the main lines of his policy:—

"I am for a government rigorously frugal and simple, applying all the possible savings of the public revenue to the discharge of the national debt; and not for a multiplication of officers and salaries merely to make partisans. . . . I am for free commerce with all nations; political connection with none; and little or no diplomatic establishment. And I am not for linking ourselves by new treaties with the quarrels of Europe; entering that field of slaughter to preserve their balance, or joining in the confederacy of kings to war against the principles of liberty."

He stood for freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and for encouraging the progress of science in all its branches;

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not for raising a hue and cry against the sacred name of philosophy, or for awing the human mind by stories of "raw-head and bloody bones." To these principles he added opposition to a standing army and to increases of the navy which would grind the country down with public burdens. As for the change of French sympathies, he had wished for the success of the French Revolution, and still wished it might end in the establishment of a free and well-ordered republic. Though he felt their atrocious depredations on American commerce, he did not think war the surest means of redressing them, and appealed to Gerry to say whether a peaceable and honourable settlement might not have been obtained.

Jefferson was now putting forth prodigious efforts. His spirited words penetrated all parts of the Union. He was assessing his friends at fifty or a hundred dollars apiece to aid the campaign. Edmund Pendleton had written in the Republican interest a patriarchal address to his countrymen — short, simple, and intelligible — which had produced a marked effect; and Jefferson urged him to recapitulate the story of the French negotiations and to show the public how it had been duped by the X. Y. Z. correspondence. "No one in America," he wrote (January 29, 1799) "can do it so well as yourself." It might be "printed in hand bills, of which we could print and disperse ten or twelve thousand copies under letter covers through all the United States by the members of Congress when they return home." To save Pendleton the trouble of hunting up the several documents which he was to recapitulate, Jefferson had collected them and enclosed them in his letter.

It has been affirmed over and over again with an iteration which might impose upon indolent readers that

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Jefferson's fears for constitutional liberty were the creatures of his own imagination; nay, that the designs with which he credited Hamilton and the leading Federalists were cunningly invented by him for political purposes.

But a survey of the facts gathered from contemporary papers and correspondence shows that, though Jefferson's suspicions and anxieties were not always directed to the right quarters, his apprehensions were well founded. Though war was never formally declared, a sort of war between France and the United States subsisted for many months. But for Jefferson's exertions it is almost certain that the Hamiltonians would have had their way. War would have been declared on France. An alliance would have been made with England. Hamilton would have commanded the American army and would in all probability have attempted his Napoleonic project — very like the later one of his rival Burr — of conquering Spanish South America. A letter to the Venezuelan filibuster, Miranda, in August, 1798, proves that Hamilton's military ambitions were built on the war fever and required war with France for their fulfillment. "The plan in my opinion," he wrote, "ought to be a fleet of Great Britain and an army of the United States, and a government for the liberated territory *agreeable to both the cooperators, about which there will be no difficulty*. To arrange the plan a competent authority from Great Britain to some person here is the best expedient. Your presence here in that case will be extremely essential. We are raising an army of about 12,000 men. General Washington has resumed his station at the head of the armies. I am second in command."

Jefferson therefore was right in thinking that Hamilton wanted war with France. Was he wrong in thinking that

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the party which, without war, had passed the Alien and Sedition Laws in defiance of the constitution would stick at nothing? It is at least far from unlikely that the United States might for a time have fallen into the hands of a military adventurer who hated popular government and would have been embarrassed by no scruples (as he showed a little later) in defeating the popular will.

Jefferson knew nothing of the Hamilton-Miranda plot; but he quickly discerned that Talleyrand, though he might have wanted a bribe, did not want war. He saw too, and made it known, that the refusal of the French Government to receive a particular envoy or minister was no cause for war. By degrees the President began to realise that war with France was avoidable, and that it was his duty to avoid it. He was impressed by a private letter from Paris and by an interview with Dr. Logan, who had seen Talleyrand; and to the utter dismay and confusion of Pickering, his Secretary of State, and the rest of the Hamiltonians he determined to reopen negotiations.

This decision, "the event of events," as Jefferson rightly called it, was announced in the Senate on February 18, 1799. Jefferson witnessed the scene and next day wrote to Madison of the consternation it had aroused among the Federalists. A few days later Pickering wrote to Hamilton: "We have all been shocked and grieved at the nomination of a Minister to negotiate with France . . . but the President is fixed. . . . I beg you to be assured, it is wholly his own act." Jefferson was overjoyed. He saw that every further effort towards war had been rendered desperate, though he did not at first believe that Adams had been converted. The Senate however approved of the President's nominations for a new mission to France; military preparations were dropped, and after a noisy

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tussle over the Alien and Sedition Laws in the House of Representatives, where the parties were very evenly balanced, Congress adjourned at the beginning of March.

Returning to Monticello Jefferson found the Virginian election campaign in full swing. The Federalists put forth tremendous efforts; for they had been exasperated by the Virginia Resolutions, which Madison had carried through the legislature in December, and were determined if possible to reverse them. They had Washington and Patrick Henry on their side, the hero and the orator of American Independence. But even so they were only able to gain a few seats. The Republicans came out of the contests with a majority of nearly two to one.

Meanwhile the President's plans for renewing negotiations with France did not mature rapidly. Jefferson fancied that Adams wanted to "parry" Talleyrand's overture; and indeed the temper of Adams was so uncertain, and his conduct so eccentric, that even so shrewd an observer as Jefferson might well have been deceived. But the important thing was that a declaration of war on France had been indefinitely postponed, that war preparations had been relaxed, and that the war fever was dying down all through the spring, summer, and autumn of 1799.

At the end of July, Adams, who was at Quincy, received from his Secretary of State satisfactory assurances from the French Government; but soon afterwards Pickering, with the support of three other Cabinet ministers, proposed to suspend the mission because of changes in the Directory. This opposition to his measures roused the President, and he set out for Philadelphia. At Trenton he met his Cabinet, reinforced by Hamilton. A most determined effort was made by them to prevent the em-

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barkation of the envoys, and Hamilton had an interview with the President, at which, as Adams has recorded, "the little man" wrought himself up to a great degree of "heat and effervescence" but without in the least deflecting the President from his resolution. So at last in October the new peace mission was despatched to Paris. The war party was confounded. A settlement with France was almost certain. The Miranda project could no longer be cherished, even in imagination, and all Hamilton's schemes for coercing liberty in America, amending the constitution in the Federal interest, extending the Federal Judiciary to insure both the energetic execution of the laws in recalcitrant states like Virginia, and "for the purposes of salutary patronage,"<sup>1</sup> fell to the ground. The army, which in December, 1798, he had hoped would be raised to 50,000 men for the attack on Spanish South America, was only five thousand in February, 1799. Nine thousand, it is true, were being added; but with the approach of a settlement with France preparations were rapidly relaxed.

In the autumn Jefferson and Madison, with the support of Wilson Nicholas and other friends, determined that something further must be done in the matter of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions; for not only had several states entered into the debate with counter resolutions repudiating their doctrines and arguments, but a Federalist Committee had prepared a report in support of the Alien and Sedition Laws, which had been approved by a narrow majority in the House of Representatives. It was therefore very desirable that Virginia and Kentucky should reaffirm the opinions of the previous year,

<sup>1</sup> See Hamilton's letter to Dayton (1799) quoted in Randall's *Jefferson*, vol. II, p. 458, and in Hamilton's Works.

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including their attachment to the Union, to which as Jefferson put it (September 5) "we are willing to sacrifice everything but the rights of self government in those important points in which we have never yielded," confident that the American people whose rights they were vindicating "will, before it shall be too late, rally with us round the true principles of our Federal compact." On the delicate question of reserving the rights of the states, in case of further violations by the Federal government of the compact, Madison in a discussion at Monticello recommended caution; and Jefferson readily concurred. Jefferson sent Nicholas a very brief outline of his ideas, but declined to prepare a further draft for the Kentuckians, saying that their talents were sufficient for every purpose, his sole concern being to make sure of concerted action so that the two states might pursue the same track. All went smoothly. The new general assembly of Virginia, convened in December, 1799, mustered many of the ablest men in the state, and the debates which ensued, like those of the preceding December, still repay study.<sup>1</sup> Madison, who had been chosen for Orange county, prepared for a Committee what was afterwards known in Virginia as Madison's Report, and is officially described as the Virginia Report of 1799. It still stands as the classical statement of the Republican case against the constitutionality of the Alien and Sedition Laws; and if there were nothing else from Madison's pen, it would justify Jefferson's opinion of his friend's superlative abilities as a constitutional lawyer and publicist. Madison took the Virginia Resolutions of 1798 *seriatim* and defended them point by point

<sup>1</sup> The Virginia Resolutions, the debates of 1798, the Madison report, and other documents are contained in a volume published by J. W. Randolph at Richmond in 1850.



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against the criticisms which had been levelled against them; and those who desire to be masters of the controversy will compare it with the Report of Congress.<sup>1</sup> Jefferson had been much perturbed by a new Federalist argument for the Sedition Act as merely declaratory of the Common Law, which, it was said, was part of the law not only of the individual states but of the Federal Union and government. This theory he rejected with indignation, and much argument on the subject will be found in his letters. Madison's Report subjected it to close analysis, and sought to prove that if it were admitted it would be fatal to the authority of the individual states: "It would overwhelm the residuary sovereignty of the states, and by one constructive operation new-model the whole political fabric of the country." Madison's Report was adopted by the Committee and by the General Assembly of Virginia, which resolved that five thousand copies should be printed and distributed "among the good people of this commonwealth."

In December, 1799, two great Virginians had passed away — Patrick Henry and George Washington. In January, 1800, the Madison Report was passed, and at the same time the Virginia Assembly gave instructions to the two Virginia senators, S. T. Mason and Wilson C. Nicholas, to support the opposition to the Alien and Sedition Laws, and to oppose the passing of any law founded on a principle so novel and so monstrous that the common law of England is in force under the government of the United States. They were also to endeavour to procure a reduction of the army, and to prevent an augmentation of the navy in the interest of the taxpayers. Here again the spirit of Jefferson was embodied in the

<sup>1</sup> See XX, American State Papers, 181.

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policy of his native state. He had the satisfaction also of seeing his friend, James Monroe, elected Governor to crown the triumph of the Republican party in Virginia.

The Presidential election was now at hand. As Republican candidate Jefferson took no prominent part in the campaign. His letters are not very numerous, but there are enough to show that he watched the progress of events with growing confidence.

William Cobbett had returned home to adopt a new rôle, and consequently *Porcupine* had been discontinued. In a letter to his friend Joseph Priestley (January 18, 1800) Jefferson observes, after thanking him for his work as a pamphleteer on the Republican side:—

“How deeply have I been chagrined and mortified at the persecutions which fanaticism and monarchy have excited against you even here! At first I believed it was merely a continuance of the English persecution. But I observe that on the demise of *Porcupine*, and division of his inheritance between Fenno and Brown, the latter (though succeeding only to the *Federal* portion of Porcupinism, not the *Anglican* which is Fenno’s part) serves up for the palate of his sect dishes of abuse against you as high seasoned as *Porcupine*’s were. You have sinned against Church and King and can therefore never be forgiven.”

In this letter he consults Priestley about a plan to establish a “liberal and modern” university for Virginia, which would be worthy of state support. It failed for the time; but it was to be realised by Jefferson in his old age.

When the news arrived that Bonaparte had drawn up a new Constitution and had got himself appointed First Consul for ten years, Jefferson could not believe that he would declare for Royalty; for if he did “he has but a few days to live. In a nation of so much enthusiasm there must be a million of Brutuses who will devote themselves to death to destroy him.” He thought it more likely that the new policy was that of a single executive to put

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an end to the broils and factions of the Directory. In any case he feared that the French nation had yet to wade through half a century of disorder and convulsions. Some Republicans thought that Bonaparte had usurped the government in order to make it a free one. Jefferson replied: "Whatever his talents may be for war, we have no proofs that he is skilled in forming governments friendly to the people. Wherever he has meddled we have seen nothing but fragments of the old Roman government stuck into materials with which they can form no cohesion: we see the bigotry of an Italian to the ancient splendour of his country, but nothing which bespeaks a luminous view of the organization of rational government." But he still cherished a hope, as we learn from a letter to old Samuel Adams, February 26, that Bonaparte would have the head, if not the heart, to "calculate truly the difference between the fame of a Washington and a Cromwell." However that might be, he had in fact transferred the destinies of the French republic from the civil to the military arm. "Some will use this as a lesson against the practicability of Republican government. I read it as a lesson against the danger of standing armies."

Meanwhile, the conflict between Republicans and Federalists, embittered by incessant state prosecutions under the sedition law, had brought about such dissensions in Pennsylvania that Jefferson feared a situation in which Hamilton — "our Bonaparte — surrounded by his comrades in arms — may step in to give us political salvation in his way." But apart from this transient fear of a *coup d'état*, all the omens were favourable. By March 4, Jefferson could write to Madison: "the Federalists begin to be very seriously alarmed about their election next fall. Their speeches in private, as well as their public and pri-

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vate demeanor to me, indicate it strongly." The event, he thought, would depend upon Pennsylvania, Jersey, and New York. North Carolina was in a precarious condition. "The lawyers all tories" — so he wrote on April 7 — "the people substantially republican, but uninformed and deceived by the lawyers, who are elected of necessity because [there are] few other candidates. The medicine for that state must be very mild and secretly administered. But nothing should be spared to give them true information." In April New York went Republican, and when Congress rose early in May Jefferson noted that the Federalists had not been able to pass a single strong measure in the lower house during the whole Session. The Federal majority had melted away, though the Senate remained undismayed to the last. But Jefferson was not carried away by elation. Though confident of the ultimate triumph of Republican principles — with simplicity, economy, and religious and civil freedom as their cornerstones — he thought that one or two elections more might be necessary. Nor does he appear to have been tormented by personal ambition. During the Session he was writing to friends to get him vocabularies of the Cherokee and other important Indian dialects to add to his collection, as he proposed to arrange all his Indian vocabularies for the press during the summer. A curious occupation for a candidate on the eve of perhaps the most important Presidential election in the history of the United States!

After returning from Monticello he wrote hardly any letters. Odious calumnies against his private character, circulated by the Federalist newspapers, were giving acute pain to his family. Only once did he stoop to notice them. A Christian minister in Connecticut, the Reverend Cotton

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Mather Smith of Shena, had denounced him for obtaining his property by fraud and robbery; stating that in one instance he had defrauded a widow and fatherless children, in an estate to which he was executor, of ten thousand pounds sterling. A correspondent sent him details of this vile slander. Every tittle of it is fable, wrote Jefferson. He had only twice been an executor, and in only one of those two cases were there a widow and children. "She was my sister. She retained and managed the estate in her own hands, and no part of it was ever in mine. . . . Again, my property is all patrimonial except about seven or eight hundred pounds worth of land purchased by myself. . . . If Mr. Smith therefore thinks the precepts of the gospel intended for those who preach them as well as for others, he will doubtless feel the duties of repentance." But he refused to prosecute any of these slanders in the courts, and forbade his correspondent to allow even this reply to Smith of Shena to appear in the newspapers. Though his religious opinions differed little from those of President Adams — they might both pass for Unitarians — the ferocity of the 'unco guid' in this campaign was directed against Jefferson. Many lying pamphlets were issued; conversations with Mazzei, Bishop Madison, and others were forged in order to show that Jefferson was an infidel who hated Christianity — all for political purposes. "The returning good sense of our country," wrote Jefferson, September, 1800, in one of his last letters before the election, "threatens abortion to their hopes, and they believe that any portion of power confided to me will be exerted in opposition to their schemes; and they believe rightly; for I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." In all Jefferson's career it is impossible to find a

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single instance of religious conformity or of pharisaical acquiescence for political purposes in the prevalent theology which he believed to be false; and it is a wonderful tribute to the good sense and right feeling of his fellow countrymen that the charges of unorthodoxy and infidelity and all the mud scattered from pulpit and press during 1799 and 1800 failed to prevent his election.

While Jefferson was enjoying the summer at Monticello the unlucky President was engaged in a sharp controversy with the Hamiltonians. In May he dismissed MacHenry from the War Department and Pickering from the Secretaryship of State, replacing the latter with John Marshall. Hamilton took his revenge by writing a pamphlet against Adams, and by a series of intrigues which went far to destroy the electoral prospects of the Federalist party. When Adams, in spite of Hamilton, was nominated Federalist candidate for the Presidency with Charles Pinckney for the Vice Presidency, Hamilton again endeavoured (unsuccessfully) to secure that Pinckney's vote should exceed Adams. With Jefferson as candidate for the Presidency the republicans associated for the Vice Presidency, Aaron Burr, whose skilful management of their organization in New York had completely outwitted Hamilton and had done much to ensure victory. The elections took place in November. When the votes were counted it was found that Jefferson and Burr had each received 73 electoral votes, Adams 65, Pinckney 64, and Jay 1.

Not foreseeing the tie with Burr, which would carry the election to the House of Representatives, Jefferson began to form his Cabinet. He chose Madison for the Department of State and Gallatin for the Treasury, and invited Robert Livingston to take over the Navy. At the same time he wrote to Burr regretting that his election to the

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Vice Presidency would deprive him of his talents in the Cabinet. But as soon as the tie was known, the Federalists began to consider how they might either defeat the election altogether, or make Burr President, or extract pledges from Jefferson which would prevent him from putting republicanism into practice.

On December 26 Jefferson told Madison that the Federalists appeared determined to prevent an election, and talked of passing a Bill handing over the government to Jay, or to Marshall. On February 11 the election went to the House of Representatives and for six days the balloting went on without a decision. In the midst of the uncertainty Jefferson informed Madison of attempts to make terms with him; but "I have declared to them unequivocally that I would not receive the government on capitulation, that I would not go into it with my hands tied." Their design of passing a law to put the government into the hands of a Federalist officer was met by an open declaration that on the day such an act passed the Middle States would arm, and that no such usurpation would be submitted to: "This first shook them; and they were completely alarmed at the resource for which we declared, to wit a convention to reorganize the government and to amend it. The very word convention gives them the horrors, as in the present democratical spirit of America they fear they should lose some of the favorite morsels of the constitution." At last after a week's balloting a number of the Federalists, seeing that they could not force Burr on the Republicans, abandoned the idea of obstructing the popular will by cheating Jefferson out of the presidency. Accordingly the Federalist electors for several of the states put in blanks, and Jefferson was elected by ten states against four on February

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17. Oddly enough Hamilton, when he despaired of a Federalist administration, told his friends that it would be better to make terms with Jefferson than with Burr. Whether or no Hamilton's view had any influence cannot be ascertained; but it is certain that it was dictated by the bitterness of his animosity against Burr, which far exceeded his hatred of Jefferson, rather than by any feeling for constitutional propriety, or any desire that effect should be given to the verdict of the electors.

John Adams took his defeat badly. The Federalist Party in the last few weeks of its ascendancy had hurried through a Judiciary Act for the purpose of increasing its control of Law and Justice and of quartering still more of their number on the taxpayer. Under this Act sixteen new Federal judgeships with a contingent of attorneys, clerks, and marshals were created. Adams *after* the election of Jefferson had appointed a large number of partisans and spent the evening of March 3 with John Marshall, signing the commissions of the new judges. Then, before sunrise on the 4th of March he drove away from the White House. This was the end of Federalist ascendancy and the beginning of the end of the Federalist Party.

Three years later, in a correspondence with Mrs. Adams, Jefferson admitted that this was the one act of John Adams which ever gave him a moment's personal displeasure:—

"I did consider his last appointments to office as personally unkind. They were from among my most ardent political enemies, from whom no faithful cooperation could ever be expected; and laid me under the embarrassment of acting through men whose views were to defeat mine, or to encounter the odium of putting others in their places. It seems but common justice to leave a successor free to act by instruments of his own choice. If my respect for him did not permit me to ascribe the whole blame to the influence of others, it left something for friendship



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to forgive; and after brooding over it for some little time, and not always resisting the expression of it, I forgave it cordially, and returned to the same state of esteem and respect for him which had so long subsisted."

The Federalist lawyers, who got their commissions on the last night of the Adams administration, were called the Midnight Judges, and the story as handed down by tradition is worth re-telling. To appreciate it we must remember that 12 P.M. on March 3, 1801 was the magical moment at which the Presidency and the whole executive power passed from Adams to Jefferson. The new placemen had been selected, but their commissions had not all been signed and issued from the Department of State. Though he had been appointed Chief Justice, John Marshall was still acting as Secretary of State, and was busy on the night of March 3 filling in these commissions. Jefferson knew what was going on. He gave his own watch to Levi Lincoln, whom he had appointed Attorney General, and ordered him to take possession of the State Department at midnight and not to allow a single paper to be removed from it after that hour. The rest of the story may be told in Sarah Randolph's words: —

"Mr. Lincoln accordingly entered Judge Marshall's office at the appointed time. 'I had been ordered by Mr. Jefferson,' he said to the Judge, 'to take possession of this office and its papers.' 'Why Mr. Jefferson is not yet qualified,' exclaimed the astonished Chief Justice. 'Mr. Jefferson considers himself in the light of an executor, bound to take charge of the papers of the Government until he is duly qualified,' was the reply. 'But it is not yet twelve o'clock,' said Judge Marshall, taking out his watch. Mr. Lincoln pulled out his, and showing it to him said, 'This is the President's watch and rules the hour.'

Judge Marshall could make no appeal from this, and was forced to retire, casting a farewell look upon the commissions lying on the table before him. In after years he used to laugh and say he had been

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allowed to pick up nothing but his hat. He had however one or two of the commissions in his pocket, and the gentlemen who received them were called thereafter 'John Adams' midnight Judges.'"

In Beveridge's *Life of John Marshall* (Vol. II, pp. 560-562) an attempt is made to discredit the best part of the story: — "Jefferson," writes Senator Beveridge, "asked Marshall to administer to him the presidential oath of office on the following day. Considering his curiously vindictive nature, it is unthinkable that Jefferson would have done this, had he sent his newly-appointed Attorney-General at the hour of midnight to stop Marshall's consummation of Adams' 'indecent' plot." But in the first place Jefferson was not at all vindictive, but of a disposition generally charitable and forgiving. And in the second place, even if he had been vindictive, there is no reason at all why he should not have called upon the Chief Justice to administer the oath of office.

BOOK VI

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

CHAPTER I

JEFFERSON'S FIRST ADMINISTRATION

"Peace hath her victories  
No less renowned than war."

— MILTON

IN 1801 when Jefferson became President, the United States contained approximately five and a half million persons, of whom nearly one-fifth were negro slaves. Of this population two-thirds lived along the Atlantic seaboard within fifty miles of tidewater, while beyond the Alleghanies—the long range, variously named, which runs from Vermont to Georgia bisecting Pennsylvania—dwelt some half million settlers. The three most important of these western settlements were in the vicinity of Pittsburg, along the Ohio River, and in Kentucky. The frontier had advanced, leaving behind it this wild mountainous region. Roads were few and bad, even in the older communities.

The United States was still mainly rural and agricultural. The total population of all the towns with more than ten thousand inhabitants was only about 200,000. Philadelphia with 70,000 stood first in size and importance, New York with 60,000, and Boston with 25,000 came next. A number of small manufactures had been

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started in New England; but American capital was mostly invested in agriculture and shipping.

Washington, the new capital of the Union, was a most uncomfortable place to live in. Its miseries have been painted by Henry Adams in the first volume of his *History of the United States*<sup>1</sup>: —

“When in the summer of 1800 the government was transferred to what was regarded by most people as a fever stricken morass, the half finished White House stood in a naked field overlooking the Potomac, with two awkward department buildings near it, a single row of brick houses, and a few isolated dwellings within sight, and nothing more; until across a swamp, a mile and a half away, the shapeless unfinished Capitol was seen, two wings without a body, ambitious enough in design to make more grotesque the nature of its surroundings. The conception proved that the United States understood the vastness of their task, and were willing to stake something on their faith in it. Never did hermit or saint condemn himself to solitude more conscientiously than Congress and the Executive in removing the government from Philadelphia to Washington. The discontented men clustered together in eight or ten boarding houses as near as possible to the Capitol, and there lived, like a convent of monks, with no other amusement or occupation than that of going from their lodgings to the Chambers and back again. Even private wealth could do little to improve their situation, for there was nothing that wealth could buy; there were in Washington no shops, or markets, or skilled labour, or commerce, or people. Public efforts and lavish use of public money could alone make the place tolerable; but Congress doled out funds for this national and personal object with so sparing a hand, that their Capitol threatened to crumble in pieces and crush Senate and House under the ruins long before the building was complete.”

The condition of the roads round Washington is the subject of a letter from Jefferson to Madison. Madison was driving from Virginia, and Jefferson was anxious that

<sup>1</sup> The leading authority on the history of the United States during Jefferson's Presidency. As it will be quoted frequently I shall not trouble my readers with the references.

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the chariot should not come to grief. His directions, it will be seen, are based on personal experience : —

“From Songsters I tried the road by Ravensworth, which comes into the turnpike road four and a half miles below Fairfax courthouse. There are about two miles of it which, I think, cannot be passed by your carriage without oversetting; and consulting with Colonel Wren who knows both roads, he says there is no comparison, that you must absolutely come by Fairfax courthouse, all that road being practicable till you come to Little’s lane, which you have to encounter whatever way you come. I passed it yesterday, a wagon being then stuck fast in it, nor do I suppose any four-wheeled carriage could then have got through the spot where the wagon was without stalling. But two days of wind and sun will by to-morrow make immense odds in it, so that I hope you will be able to pass it. . . .

“I have met with Mr. Gaines and a Mr. Beauspoke at Brown’s. They live near. I spoke of the difficulty of your getting up the Bull Run hill. They agreed to take each a horse and draw your carriage up. Accept their offer by all means, as however steady your horses they will be in the utmost peril of balking, and should they once begin there are other hills sufficient to make them give you a great deal of vexation. The Bull Run hill is really the worst I ever saw on a public road. Still, let nothing tempt you to go by Centerville, as on that route the whole is cut by wagons into mud holes.”

On the day of his inauguration (March 4, 1801) Jefferson put aside all the pomp and ceremonial of his predecessors. According to one account <sup>1</sup> he rode from his lodgings without a guard or servant, hitched his horse’s bridle to the palisade and then entered the Capitol to deliver his Inaugural Address. This was the keynote : —

“We are all Republicans: we are all Federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union, or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error

<sup>1</sup> That of the traveller John Davis, which is more picturesque than the narrative of Edward Thornton, the British Minister.

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of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."

Jefferson's First Inaugural was at one time almost as familiar to Americans as the Declaration of Independence. Its main purpose was to allay the passions raised by the violent agitations of the past eight years; but it also foreshadowed a new system of government. After enumerating the advantages they already enjoyed, the President added:—

"With all these blessings, what more is necessary to make us a happy and prosperous people? Still one thing more, fellow-citizens,—a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labour the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of our felicities."

After the Address the oath of office was administered by John Marshall, the new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who had been so busy the night before signing the midnight appointments. It is a curious thing that the three principal figures at the ceremony should have been Jefferson, Marshall, his most powerful antagonist, and Aaron Burr, whom Jefferson was to prosecute and Marshall to acquit.

Many republican stalwarts were dismayed by the mildness of the sentiments enunciated in the First Inaugural. They had looked for some spectacular recognition of the great revolution that had taken place, and some indication of drastic changes. But Jefferson, once the victory was gained, showed that he was a magnanimous statesman, as well as a superb party leader.

To John Dickinson he wrote on March 6 in response to congratulations:—

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"The storm through which we have passed has been tremendous indeed. The tough sides of our Argosy have been thoroughly tried. . . . We shall put her on her republican tack, and she will now show by the beauty of her motion the skill of her builders. . . . A just and solid republican government maintained here will be a standing monument and example for the aim and imitation of the people of other countries; and I join with you in the hope and belief that they will see from our example that a free government is of all others the most energetic."

In the hour of victory, Jefferson found special satisfaction in the defeat of those who had "discountenanced all advances in science as dangerous innovations," and had "endeavoured to render philosophy and republicanism terms of reproach." The victory moreover, as he wrote to a correspondent, had furnished "a new proof of the falsehood of Montesquieu's doctrine that a republic can be preserved only in a small territory."

In spite of the midnight appointments and other provocations he was bent on conciliating the majority of the Federalists, who (unlike most of their leaders) were real republicans. Nor would he deprive civil servants of office on the ground of political sympathies, even though his predecessor had adopted the spoils system. He felt that the late leaders of the Federalists "were almost without followers," and had "retreated into the stronghold of the judiciary." As to what he called the appointments and disappointments of existing and would-be office holders he decided that "all appointments to *civil* offices *during pleasure*, made after the event of the election was certainly known to Mr. Adams, are considered as nullities." Altogether 24 of the new officials were dismissed. The President also resolved that he would never appoint a relative, however meritorious. As he put it to one of them, George Jefferson, March 27:—

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"The public will never be made to believe that an appointment of a relative is made on the ground of merit alone, uninfluenced by family views; nor can they ever see with approbation offices, the disposals of which they trust to their Presidents for public purposes, divided out as family property. Mr. Adams degraded himself infinitely by his conduct on this subject, as General Washington had done himself the greatest honour. With two such examples to proceed by I should be doubly inexcusable to err. It is true that this places the relations of the President in a worse situation than if he were a stranger; but the public good . . . requires this sacrifice."

His policy towards office seekers did not satisfy all the party editors or newspapers. Good feeling, he explained to another correspondent, is not for the interest of the printers. "They, like the clergy, live by the zeal they can kindle and the schism they can create."

In reply to a remonstrance from New Haven republicans, who felt that a change in the administration ought to produce a change in the subordinate offices, he laments the idea that any one should deem it necessary for all officers to think with their principal, and that half society should thus be interdicted from government and proscribed as unworthy of trust. After making the proper corrections he would "return with joy to that state of things when the only question concerning a candidate shall be: is he honest? is he capable? is he faithful to the constitution?"

In Madison Jefferson had an excellent foreign secretary; but the policy was Jefferson's, and sometimes he took the pen himself. Just before Livingston started for his mission to France the President found time to write him a careful letter (Sept. 9) on "the great question of the maritime law of nations which at present agitates Europe," treating of contraband, blockade, search, and generally of the rights of neutrals. Though they



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would not engage in war to establish true principles, he wished his ambassador to understand that the doctrine "free bottoms free goods" was that which would carry the wishes of the American nation. The opposing doctrine that the rights of peaceful neutrals must give way to the convenience of those who prefer plundering and murdering one another was a monstrous one. But, as he wrote to Short, they must keep out of European politics:—

"to be entangled with them would be a much greater evil than a temporary acquiescence in the false principles which have prevailed. Peace is our most important interest and a recovery from debt. We feel ourselves strong and daily growing stronger. The census just now concluded shows we have added to our population a third of what it was ten years ago. This will be a duplication in 23 or 24 years. If we can delay but for a few years the necessity of vindicating the laws of nature on the ocean we shall be the more sure of doing it with effect. The day is within my time as well as yours when we may say by what laws other nations shall treat us on the sea. And we will say it."

On the financial side some of his supporters were alarmed on discovering that Jefferson had decided to abolish the whole of the internal taxes. True they were costly to collect and involved the maintenance of a host of officials, whose patronage was thought very valuable for party purposes. But Jefferson was resolute. These taxes only produced a million of dollars, and with Gallatin's invaluable assistance he expected to economise at the rate of two or three millions a year. They counted on enough revenue to support the government, pay interest on the public debt, and discharge the principal in fifteen years. Jefferson looked upon unnecessary officials as parasites; and he took a double delight in suppressing taxes and collectors of taxes simultaneously. A letter of April 2, 1802, to Kosciusko, tells how he is engaged in dis-

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arming executive patronage by suppressing unnecessary offices, and mentions the fury of the Federalist leaders. They are impotent, he says, and will soon only be heard of in the newspapers "which serve as chimneys to carry off noxious vapours and smoke."

On March 5, the Senate confirmed the Cabinet appointments of Madison as Secretary of State, Henry Dearborn of Massachusetts, as Secretary of War, and Levi Lincoln, also of Massachusetts, as Attorney General. Albert Gallatin was destined for the Treasury; but his name was not presented until after the new Congress met. Robert Smith of Maryland was appointed Secretary of the Navy, and Gideon Granger of Connecticut Postmaster-General. This completed the Cabinet. It proved to be a singularly harmonious body, Madison and Gallatin were of course the principal figures. Gallatin, a financier of the first rank, with a passion for public economy worthy of his chief, was a Genevan by birth. A brilliant talker and effective debater, with an unusually large fund of political courage, he had proved himself easily first among the republicans in mastery of finance and economics. "Three more agreeable men than Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin," says Henry Adams, "were never collected round the dinner table of the White House; and their difference in age was enough to add zest to their friendship; for Jefferson was born in 1743, Madison in 1751, and Gallatin in 1761."

A republican simplicity was at once introduced into the new capital. Ceremony disappeared. The President was accessible to visitors at all times. Levees were abandoned. He kept open house and entertained all comers with true Virginian hospitality. "His way," wrote Senator Plumer of New Hampshire, December 25, 1802, "is to have about

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ten members of Congress at a time. We sat down to the table at four and rose at six and walked immediately into another room and drank coffee. We had a very good dinner with a profusion of fruits and sweetmeats. The wine was the best I ever drank, particularly the champagne, which was delicious." At these dinners precedence and rank were abolished. The diners sat where they pleased. Some of the Foreign Ministers could hardly breathe in such an atmosphere, and sent bitter complaints home.

John Quincy Adams gives us a glimpse in his diary of a conversation at Jefferson's table. There were fourteen present, nearly all Congressmen and Senators:—

"At dinner there was much amusing conversation between him [Jefferson] and Dr. Mitchell, although altogether desultory. There was, as usual a dissertation upon wines, not very edifying. Mr. Jefferson said that the *Epicurean* philosophy came nearest to the truth, in his opinion, of any ancient system of philosophy, but that it had been misunderstood and misinterpreted. He wished the work of Gassendi concerning it had been translated. It was the only accurate account of it extant. I mentioned Lucretius. He said that was only a part—only the *natural* philosophy. But the *moral* philosophy was only to be found in Gassendi. Dr. Mitchell mentioned Mr. Fulton's steamboat as an invention of great importance. To which Mr. Jefferson, assenting, added, "and I think his torpedoes a valuable invention too." He then enlarged upon the certainty of their effect, and adverted to some of the obvious objections against them, which he contended were not conclusive. . . . Mr. Jefferson said that he had always been extremely fond of agriculture and knew nothing about it; but the person who united with other sciences the greatest agricultural knowledge of any man he knew was Mr. Madison. He was the best farmer in the world."

On another occasion Jefferson turned the conversation to the French Revolution and remarked how contrary to all expectations this great *bouleversement* had turned out. It seemed as if everything in that country for the last

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twelve or fifteen years had been a dream. He wished the French people could return to the constitution of 1789.

"Jefferson's personality during these eight years," says Henry Adams, "appeared to be the government, and impressed itself, like that of Bonaparte, although by a different process, on the mind of the nation. In the village simplicity of Washington society he was more than a king, for he was alone in social as well as political prominence. Except the British Legation, no house in Washington was open to general society. The whole mass of politicians, even the Federalists, were dependent on Jefferson and 'the Palace' for amusement, and if they refused to go there, they 'lived like bears, brutalized and stupefied.'"

Although refinement of manners, easy dignity, and conversational charm, adorned by scholarship, science, and familiar intercourse with the best society of Paris, made Jefferson's hospitable and well-furnished table an oasis in the squalid desert of Washington, yet the President contrived to mix a good deal of republicanism with his viands. We could imagine him like a character in Juvenal producing such wine and such toasts as Thrasea and Helvidius used to drink on the birthdays of Brutus and Cassius. It was thought that he made an affectation of republican simplicity and unconventionality, and that some of the shocks he administered to foppery and flummery were too severe. Besides abolishing levees and other tawdry imitations of court ceremonial (which had been furnished up in New York and Philadelphia for Washington, who tolerated, and Adams, who enjoyed them), Jefferson took pains to impress upon the diplomatic corps, trained in the bows and curtsseys of European drawing rooms to regard these as essentials, that they are but the servile marks of a semi-barbarous tyranny, or trifles more

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worthy of a nursery than of the manly dignity of a free society. One morning, when the Danish Minister called to see him, the President appeared in slippers. This drew from the Minister a defence of formalities, whereupon the President improved the occasion by a story of Ferdinand, King of Naples, who had complained to his Minister Caraccioli of the irksomeness of court ceremonial and asked whether he could not be relieved of his sufferings. By way of showing that it would not be safe to gratify his master's wishes Caraccioli remarked: "Your Majesty must remember that you yourself are but a ceremony."

The British Minister Merry proved himself a perfect type of the diplomatic prig. On one occasion, when Mr. and Mrs. Merry were guests along with Mr. and Mrs. Madison, the President committed an offence so serious that Mr. Merry declined further invitations. For when dinner was announced Jefferson, who happened to be talking to Mrs. Madison, conducted her into the dining room. The Federalist newspapers pretended to regard this as a studied insult, and there was a great fuss about it. Madison had to explain the whole affair to Monroe, in order that he might explain it to the British Government; but Monroe was able to reply that Merry was wrong even as to his claim of precedence, since in England Mrs. Monroe had been postponed to the wife of an under-Secretary! Subsequently Jefferson showed his good sense and amiability by inquiring through the Swedish *Chargé* whether, if Merry were invited to a family dinner with the President, he would accept the invitation. The answer being in the affirmative Jefferson wrote the invitation in his own hand; whereupon the insufferable Merry wrote to Madison, Secretary of State, to know whether he was invited in his private or his official character. If in the

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former he must await His Majesty's permission to accept it, if in the latter he must first have assurance that he would receive the attention and respect due to His Majesty's envoy.

Though he pursued a policy of conciliation towards the Federalists, Jefferson did nothing to placate the religious prejudices of New England. On the contrary one of his first acts gave fresh offence to the orthodox. This was a letter to Thomas Paine, then in France, offering him conveyance to America in an United States frigate. The letter also expressed admiration of Paine's work, and the hope that he would be able to carry it on in America. The name of Paine was anathema in the conventicles; and when the letter was published, all the old charges of infidelity and immorality were revived against the President. In the campaign of calumny Callender, a depraved journalist of Scottish origin, who had been refused a job under government, joined the Federalists and black-guarded Jefferson with all the ardour of a disappointed mercenary.<sup>1</sup>

Before the Administration had been in power six months it was engaged in a war against the Barbary pirates; and the Navy, which Jefferson had at first desired to shut up in port,<sup>2</sup> was sent off to fight in the Mediterranean. Both Washington and Adams had paid tribute to Tripoli for the protection of American commerce. Jefferson had disapproved of these payments, and when the Bashaw made some insolent demands, he sent a squadron to hunt the pirates down. War was declared in August, and fighting

<sup>1</sup> A low class Richmond paper, edited by Callender, threw for a time on the circumstantial lies which he circulated against Jefferson's private life and character.

<sup>2</sup> To avoid war and promote economy.

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continued during the remainder of his First Administration, after which the Mediterranean was at last made safe for the American flag.

The new Congress met in December, when Jefferson, departing from the custom of his predecessors, sent a written message, requiring no reply. After commenting on the coming of peace in Europe with the Treaty of Amiens, and the success of American frigates against the Tripolitans, he turned to internal affairs. The recent census showed that the population had doubled in twenty-two years, while revenue had increased in even greater proportion. He thought the time had come when the country could dispense with all internal taxation. But to diminish burdens they must diminish expenses:—

“Considering the general tendency to multiply offices and dependencies, and to increase the ultimate term of burden which the citizen can bear, it behooves us to avail ourselves of every occasion which presents itself for taking off the surcharge, that it never may be seen here that, after leaving to labour the smallest portion of its earnings on which it can subsist, government shall itself consume the residue of what it was instituted to guard.”

He therefore recommended a reduction of the civil list, the army, and the navy. It has been thought strange that he did not embark on a reform of the Constitution. The key to the conflict between the Federalists and the States Rights men, says Dr. Channing, lay in the powers of the Supreme Court. Jefferson complained at the beginning of his administration that the Federalists had retired into the Supreme Court as “into a stronghold.” Why then did he not propose an amendment of the Constitution, or of the Judiciary Act of 1797, “the triumph of Federalist centralisation”? An answer to this question has been given by Henry Adams:—

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"Jefferson wished to overthrow the Federalists and annihilate the last opposition before attempting radical reforms. Confident that State Rights were safe in his hands, he saw no occasion to alarm the people with legislation directed against past rather than future dangers. His party acquiesced, but not without misgivings."

With all respect to a brilliant historian I should have thought the true reason to be that Jefferson, like Cobden sixty years later, thought Peace and Retrenchment far more important than constitutional reform, even if constitutional reform were practicable.

The republican party now had a majority in both Houses of Congress. Their first task was the establishment of the new financial policy of Jefferson and Gallatin. The Secretaries of War and the Navy carried out substantial economies; all internal taxes were swept away, and at one stroke nearly half the government patronage was abolished. A sinking fund was organised under which the public debt was to be paid off in 16 years. These two measures, says Adams, were the foundation of Jefferson's policy. He meant to secure the United States against danger of war, not by rivalry of armaments, but by making it to the interest of Europe to have free commercial intercourse with America. It was a new system of government based upon the utilitarian principle of enlightened selfishness.

The Federalists offered little resistance to the Government's financial measures, reserving their strength to oppose the repeal of the Judiciary Act of 1801 (passed just before Jefferson came into office) which had extended the functions and numbers of Federal judges. The debates on this issue were long and sharp; but on March 3 the Act was repealed. During this Session the Naturalisation law was amended, five years' residence being substi-



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tuted for fourteen as a condition of citizenship. The State of Ohio was admitted to the Union, and the southwestern territory was yielded by Georgia to the Federal Government. These two measures strengthened the Administration. It gained two Senators by the admission of Ohio; and after the acquisition of the southwestern territory Jefferson — to quote Henry Adams — “was henceforth better able to carry out his humane policy towards the Indians.”

All the transactions of Jefferson's first Administration pale before the Louisiana purchase. Louisiana and the Floridas belonged to Spain; but in October, 1800, Napoleon, who was dreaming of a French Empire in the New World, procured their transference by a secret treaty to France. When a report of this reached him, Jefferson at once scented danger. But he waited for an opportunity. At last on April 18, 1802, he wrote to Chancellor Livingston, his Minister in Paris: —

“The cession of Louisiana and the Floridas by Spain to France, works most sorely on the United States. On this subject the Secretary of State has written to you fully; yet I cannot forbear recurring to it personally, so deep is the impression it makes on my mind. . . . There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market, and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half our whole produce, and contain more than half our inhabitants. France, placing herself in that door, assumes to us the attitude of defiance. . . . The day that France takes possession of New Orleans, fixes the sentence which is to restrain her forever within her low-water mark. It seals the union of two nations who, in conjunction, can maintain exclusive possession of the ocean. From that moment we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation.”

He desired Livingston to lay before the French govern-

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ment the danger of transforming the United States into an enemy : —

“Will a few years possession of New Orleans add equally to the strength of France? She may say she needs Louisiana for the supply of her West Indies. She does not need it in time of peace, and in war she could not depend on them because they would be so easily intercepted. . . . Every eye in the United States is now fixed on the affairs of Louisiana. Perhaps nothing since the Revolutionary war, has produced more uneasy sensations through the body of the nation.”

Livingston found Talleyrand, the French Foreign Minister, indisposed to negotiate, and no progress was made until October, 1802, when the Spanish authorities, who had not yet delivered the territory to France, closed the mouth of the Mississippi to American vessels by suspending the right of deposit. This naturally roused the fighting spirit of the Western settlers. They called loudly for strong measures, and the Federalists, eager to embarrass the President, lent their support. Jefferson took time by the forelock. He nominated Monroe as special envoy to France to aid Livingston, and secured an appropriation of two million dollars “to enable the Executive to commence with more effect a negotiation with the French and Spanish governments relative to the purchase from them of the island of New Orleans and the provinces of East and West Florida.”

To make sure of Monroe, Jefferson wrote him an urgent letter on January 13 : —

“All eyes, all hopes are now fixed on you ; and were you to decline, the chagrin would be universal. . . . Indeed, I know nothing which would produce such a shock. For on the event of this mission depend the future destinies of this republic. If we cannot by a purchase of the country insure to ourselves a course of perpetual peace and friendship with all nations, then as war cannot be distant, it behooves us

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immediately to be preparing for that course, without, however, hastening it; and it may be necessary (on your failure on the continent) to cross the channel. We shall get entangled in European politics, and figuring more, be much less happy and prosperous. This can only be prevented by a successful issue of your present mission."

The march of events favoured American interests. A French expedition to Haiti had failed to quell Toussaint's revolt. Tired of the peace of Amiens Napoleon had decided to reopen the war with England. Until England was vanquished, the new world must remain unconquered; and he needed money badly. On April 11, 1803, therefore, he ordered his finance Minister, Barbé-Marbois, an old friend of Jefferson's, to offer to sell the whole territory of Louisiana to the American Minister Livingston. Next day Monroe arrived. Only two million dollars had been voted by Congress, and that for New Orleans and the Floridas. The amount demanded by the French was at first 100 million francs, ten times the sum appropriated.<sup>1</sup> But Livingston and Monroe were fully possessed of Jefferson's views and did not hesitate to exceed their powers. They knew his hopes had not gone beyond New Orleans, but that he considered the whole territory as vital to the peaceful expansion of the Union. After some bargaining with Marbois, who had raised Napoleon's price, the Commissioners at the end of April agreed to pay sixty million livres clear,<sup>2</sup> and assume liability for claims by American citizens for damages against the French. Great was Jefferson's joy when the despatches of Livingston and Monroe arrived at Washington. But with joy, embarrassment was mingled; for the Constitution made no provision for holding foreign territory, nor

<sup>1</sup> It was agreed that 5.3 francs (equal to five livres eight sous) should be counted as the equivalent of a dollar.

<sup>2</sup> About 11,250,000 dollars.

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for incorporating foreign nations into the Union; and certainly did not vest any such power in the Executive. At first the President desired an amendment to the Constitution authorising the purchase, and indeed drafted one for the purpose. But Livingston and Monroe had assured him that delay might be dangerous — for Napoleon might at any moment change his mind — and Jefferson had to weigh the national interest against constitutional propriety. "I confess," he wrote to Wilson C. Nicholas, September 7, 1803, "I think it important in the present case to set an example against broad construction by appealing for new power to the people. If, however, our friends shall think differently, certainly I shall acquiesce with satisfaction, confiding that the good sense of our country will correct evil construction when it shall produce ill effects."

Accordingly he summoned Congress to a special Session in October. The Senate immediately ratified the Treaty, and the House voted an issue of bonds to pay for the new territory. The only protests came from a small group of Federalists, who denounced the treaty as "unconstitutional," and questioned the validity of the title. The nation as a whole was well content with its bargain, though few could have guessed the future wealth and population of a region which was to add fourteen States to the Union. A further strain was put upon the doctrine of strict construction by an Act of March, 1804, providing for the government of the new territory, whereby it has been said the President "stepped into the shoes of the King of Spain." He was empowered to appoint the Governor, the law-making council, the superior judges, and in fact to construct the whole machinery of administration, legislative, executive, and judicial, while the inhabitants

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for the time being were allowed no participation in the Government. In his address to Congress on October 17 the President surveyed the advantages gained by the acquisition of Louisiana and expressed a hope that no additional taxes would be required in consequence of the addition to the public debt. Three millions of the old debt had been discharged during the year, and the Treasury had a balance of nearly six million dollars in hand. Turning to the renewal of hostilities in Europe he said :—

“We have seen with sincere concern the flames of war lighted up again in Europe and nations with which we have the most friendly and useful relations engaged in mutual destruction. While we regret the miseries in which we see others involved, let us bow with gratitude to that kind Providence which — inspiring with wisdom and moderation our late legislative councils while placed under the urgency of the greatest wrongs — guarded us from hastily entering into the same sanguinary conflict, and left us only to look on and to pity its ravages. These will be heaviest on those immediately engaged. Yet the nations pursuing peace will not be exempt from all evil. In the course of this conflict let it be our endeavour as it is our interest and desire to cultivate the friendship of the belligerent nations by every act of justice and of innocent kindness; to receive their armed vessels with hospitality from the distresses of the sea, but to administer the means of annoyance to none; to establish in our harbours such a police as may maintain law and order; to restrain our citizens from embarking individually in a war in which their country takes no part; to punish severely those persons, citizens, or aliens, who shall usurp the colour of our flag for vessels not entitled to it, infecting thereby with suspicion those of real Americans, and committing us into controversies for the redress of wrongs not our own; to exact from every nation the observance towards our vessels and citizens of those principles and practices which all civilised nations acknowledge; to merit the character of a just nation, and maintain that of an independent one, preferring every consequence to insult and habitual wrong.”

These duties of neutrality he proceeded to enforce by an appeal to enlightened self interest :—

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"Separated by a wide ocean from the nations of Europe, and from the political interests which entangle them together, with productions and wants which render our commerce and friendship useful to them and theirs to us, it cannot be the interest of any to assail us nor ours to disturb them. We should be most unwise indeed were we to cast away the singular blessings of the position in which nature has placed us, the opportunities she has endowed us with of pursuing at a distance from foreign intentions the paths of industry, peace, and happiness; of cultivating general friendship, and of bringing collisions of interest to the umpirage of reason rather than of force. How desirable then must it be in a government like ours to see its citizens adopt individually the views, the interests, and the conduct, which their country should pursue, divesting themselves of those passions and partialities which tend to lessen useful friendships and to embarrass and embroil us in the calamitous scenes of Europe."

To his intimate friend Dr. Priestley Jefferson confided his view of the Louisiana transaction in a letter of January 29, 1804, showing that it was in no spirit of imperialism that he looked upon this great acquisition of territory. He had foreseen and provided for the event. But Bonaparte's readiness to negotiate had been hastened by the rupture with Great Britain:—

"The *dénouement* has been happy; and I confess I look to this duplication of area for the extending of a government so free and economical as ours, as a great achievement to the mass of happiness which is to ensue. Whether we remain one confederacy, or form into Atlantic and Mississippi confederacies, I believe not very important to the happiness of either part.<sup>1</sup> Those of the western confederacy will be as much our children and descendants as those of the eastern, and I feel myself as much identified with that country, in future time, as with this; and did I now foresee a separation at some future day, yet I should feel the duty and desire to promote the western interests as zealously as the eastern, doing all the good for both portions of our future family which should fall within my power."

<sup>1</sup>One of the Federalist objections to the purchase of Louisiana was that it would separate the Union into an eastern and a western Federation because so large an area could not be controlled by one government.

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The extent of the new territory of Louisiana was by no means certain. The treaty, unfortunately as it proved, had not defined the boundaries. Did it include Florida on the east and Texas on the west? Jefferson believed that it did, Monroe thought that Texas but not Florida was included. Jefferson took the problem with him to Monticello, and there during two months of the summer spent much time investigating it with the help of old maps and books. To Madison he wrote on August 25, 1803: "I have used my spare moments to investigate, by the help of my books here, the subject of Louisiana. I am satisfied our right to the Perdido is substantial, and can only be opposed by a quibble on form only; and our right westwardly to the Bay of St. Bernard may be strongly maintained."

And on March 31, 1804, he wrote to William Dunbar: —

"In the first visit, after receiving the treaty, which I paid to Monticello, which was in August, I availed myself of what I have there to investigate the limits. While I was in Europe, I had purchased everything I could lay my hands on which related to any part of America, and particularly a pretty full collection of the English, French, and Spanish authors, on the subject of Louisiana. The information I got from these was entirely satisfactory, and I threw it into a shape which would easily take the form of a memorial. I now enclose you a copy of it."

This was perhaps the most important of the many occasions on which Jefferson employed the best private library in America for his country's service. In 1804 Congress authorised him to erect the Mobile Bay area into a customs district. It was done in spite of protests from the Spanish Minister, and during the next eight years the United States gradually absorbed more and more of the sea coast.

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Jefferson's vision pierced beyond the Mississippi and the Rockies. At the beginning of 1803 he persuaded Congress to make an appropriation for one of his pet projects — an expedition, which should explore the head waters of the Missouri River, and make its way to the Pacific. To lead the expedition he chose his private secretary, Captain Meriwether Lewis, and as second in command, Lieutenant William Clark, a brother of George Rogers Clark, of Revolutionary war fame. The choice was splendidly justified; Jefferson's character of Lewis, written after the death of that intrepid explorer, helps to explain the success of the enterprise: —

"Of courage undaunted; possessing a firmness and perseverance of purpose which nothing but impossibilities could divert from its direction; careful as a father of those committed to his charge, yet steady in the maintenance of order and discipline; intimate with the Indian character, customs, and principles; habituated to the hunting life; guarded by exact observation of the vegetables and animals of his country against losing time in the description of objects already possessed; honest, disinterested, liberal, of sound understanding, and a fidelity to truth so scrupulous that whatever he should report would be as certain as if seen by ourselves."<sup>1</sup>

Here is the character of an ideal explorer, who had carried out with complete success the objects proposed by the President and had done much to promote the 'Manifest Destiny' under which succeeding waves of pioneers carried American energy with the American flag from sea to sea.

On November 16, 1803, Jefferson wrote to Lewis concerning the details of the exploration: —

"The object of your mission is single, the direct water communication from sea to sea formed by the bed of the Missouri and perhaps

<sup>1</sup> This is from Jefferson's Memoir of Meriwether Lewis prefixed to a record of the Expedition which was published at Philadelphia in 1814.



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the Oregon; by having Mr. Clark with you we consider the expedition as double manned, and therefore the less liable to failure; for which reason neither of you should be exposed to risks by going off of your line. I have proposed in conversation, and it seems generally assented to, that Congress shall appropriate ten or twelve thousand dollars for exploring the principal waters of the Mississippi and Missouri. In that case, I should send a party up the Red River to its head, then to cross over to the head of the Arkansas, and come down that. A second party for the Pani and Padouca rivers, and a third, perhaps, for the Morsigone and St. Peter's."

His instructions to Lewis cover several pages, and abound in surprising details showing Jefferson's wonderful combination of science and practical sagacity. They were to find out as much as possible about the Indians — their tribes, languages, traditions, monuments, customs, laws, the diseases prevalent, and the remedies they used, etc., etc.; they were also to examine or notice the soil, climate, vegetables, animals, insects, minerals, and geology of the country, treating the natives in the most friendly way, and telling them of our wish to be neighbourly, friendly, and useful to them. "Should you reach the Pacific Ocean, endeavour to learn if there be any port within your reach frequented by the sea vessels of any nation, and to send two of your trusted people back by sea, in such way as they shall judge practicable, with a copy of your notes."

In May, 1804, the party started from their winter quarters near the present city of St. Louis to ascend the Missouri. On November 7, 1805, after exciting and perilous adventures they reached the Pacific Ocean, the first white men to cross the Continent. A year later they were back at St. Louis, having marched some 8,000 miles. Jefferson had the satisfaction of informing the world of their success in a special message to Congress of February 19, 1806.

In all these steps Jefferson was acting wholly on his own

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initiative. It has been said that Gladstone was an opportunist with a conscience. Jefferson was a visionary with the statesman's gift for accomplishing what is practicable. It is his peculiar glory that he saw the future greatness of his country and took the right measures for securing its peaceful development. The "dreamer" and the "philosopher" had studied the geography of his own continent to some purpose. The United States of to-day is the legitimate offspring of Jefferson, the peaceful expansionist, the enterprising explorer.

Meanwhile the date of the Presidential election was drawing near. There was no doubt of Jefferson's renomination, or of his re-election, once he had decided to stand for a second time. He had no rival in the affections of the people. Peace and prosperity had been reflected in the public finances. Henry Adams writes in his history:—

"Although the customs produced two millions less than in 1802, yet when the Secretary in October, 1803, announced his financial arrangements, which included the purchase money of fifteen million dollars for Louisiana, he was able to provide for all his needs without imposing a new tax. The treaty required the issue of six per cent bonds for \$11,250,000, redeemable after fifteen years. These were issued, and to meet the interest and sinking fund, Gallatin added from his surplus an annual appropriation of seven hundred thousand dollars to his general fund, so that the discharge of the whole debt would take place within the year 1818, instead of eighteen months earlier, as had been intended. . . . This was ideal success. On a sudden call, to pay out four million dollars in hard money, and add seven hundred thousand dollars to annual expenditure, without imposing a tax, was a feat that warranted congratulations."

The election took place in November. Jefferson and Governor Clinton of New York were nominated as President and Vice-President by the Congressional caucus for the Republicans, and the Federalists agreed to vote for

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C. C. Pinckney and Rufus King. The completeness of Jefferson's victory marks the measure of his success and of popular approval. He carried fifteen of the seventeen states of the Union, and in the electoral college received 162 votes against 14 for the Federalist candidates.

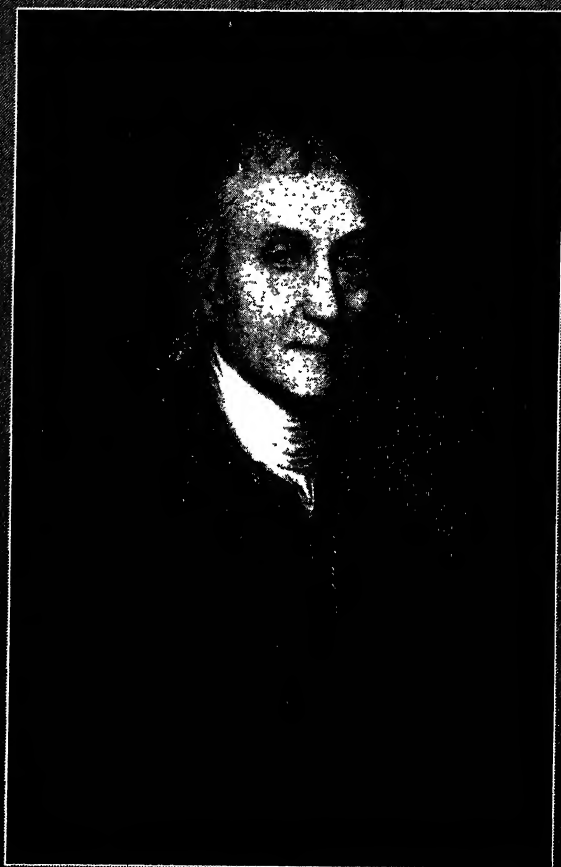
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During his four years of office, Jefferson's private correspondence is naturally less voluminous and varied than usual. There are several long and interesting letters to Dr. Priestley, which taken together give a very accurate picture of Jefferson's views on the destiny of the United States, both in America and in relation to Europe. Thus on June 19, 1802, he writes:—

"Our people in a body are wise, because they are under the unrestrained and unperverted operation of their own understanding. Those whom they have assigned to the direction of their affairs have stood with a pretty even front. If any one of them was withdrawn, many others entirely equal have been ready to fill his place with good abilities. A nation, composed of such materials, and free in all its members from distressing wants, furnishes hopeful implements for the interesting experiment of self government; and we feel that we are acting under obligations not confined to the limits of our own society. It is impossible not to be sensible that we are acting for all mankind; that circumstances denied to others, but indulged to us, have imposed on us the duty of proving what is the degree of freedom and self government in which a society may venture to leave its individual members."

On April 9, 1803, he transmitted to Priestley a sketch of his religious opinions, and on April 21, he enclosed to Dr. Benjamin Rush, a "Syllabus of an Estimate of the Merit of the Doctrines of Jesus compared with those of others":—

"In some of the delightful conversations with you, in the evenings of 1798-9," he writes to Rush, "which served as an anodyne to the



*Painted by Stuart*



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afflictions of the crisis through which our country was then labouring, the Christian religion was sometimes our topic; and I then promised you, that one day or other, I would give you my views of it. They are the result of a life of inquiry and reflection, and very different from that anti-Christian system imputed to me by those who know nothing of my opinions. To the corruptions of Christianity I am, indeed, opposed; but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian, in the only sense in which he wished any one to be; sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to him every *human* excellence; and believing he never claimed any other. At the short interval since these conversations, when I could justifiably abstract my mind from public affairs, the subject has been under my contemplation. But the more I considered it, the more it expanded beyond the measure of either my time or information. In the moment of my late departure from Monticello I received from Dr. Priestley his little treatise of 'Socrates and Jesus compared.' This being a section of the general view I had taken of the field, it became a subject of reflection while on the road, and unoccupied otherwise. The result was, to arrange in my mind a syllabus, or outline of such an estimate of the comparative merits of Christianity, as I wished to see executed by some one with more leisure and information for the task than myself. This I now send you, as the only discharge of my promise I can probably ever execute."

There are also several letters about the Indians, in whose present and future welfare Jefferson always took deep interest. To Colonel Benjamin Hawkins, who had been appointed to transact some business with them, he writes February 18, 1803:—

"I consider the business of hunting as already become insufficient to furnish clothing and subsistence to the Indians. The promotion of agriculture, therefore, and household manufacture, are essential in their preservation, and I am disposed to aid and encourage it liberally. This will enable them to live on much smaller portions of land, and, indeed, will render their vast forests useless but for the range of cattle; for which purpose, also, as they become better farmers, they will be found useless, and even disadvantageous. While they are learning to do better on less land, our increasing numbers will be calling for more

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land, and thus a coincidence of interests will be produced between those who have lands to spare, and want other necessities, and those who have such necessities to spare, and want lands. This commerce, then, will be for the good of both, and those who are friends to both ought to encourage it. . . .

"In truth the ultimate point of rest and happiness for them is to let our settlements and theirs meet and blend together, to intermix, and become one people, incorporating themselves with us as citizens of the United States. This is what the natural progress of things will, of course, bring on, and it will be better to promote than to retard it."

In April, 1804, Jefferson lost the younger of his two daughters, Maria Eppes, who died at Monticello. To a letter of sympathy from John Page he replied:—

"Your letter, my dear friend, is a new proof of the goodness of your heart, and the part you take in my loss marks an affectionate concern for the greatness of it. It is great indeed. Others may lose of their abundance, but I, of my want, have lost even the half of all I had. My evening prospects now hang on the slender thread of a single life."

Another letter came from Mrs. John Adams with whom Maria had stayed as a girl. This led to a correspondence on the differences which had estranged them, and paved the way for a complete reconciliation between Quincy and Monticello.

On July 18, 1804, he writes to his friend Philip Mazzei—expounding briefly his theory of treaties:—

"On the subject of treaties, our system is to have none with any nation, as far as can be avoided. The treaty with England has therefore not been renewed, and all overtures for treaty with other nations have been declined. We believe, that with nations as with individuals, dealings may be carried on as advantageously, perhaps more so, while their continuance depends on voluntary good treatment, as if fixed by a contract, which, when it becomes injurious to either, is made, by forced constructions, to mean what suits them, and becomes a cause of war instead of a bond of peace."

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He adds that the purchase of Louisiana has "enabled us to do a handsome thing for Fayette. He had received a grant of between eleven and twelve thousand acres north of Ohio, worth, perhaps, a dollar an acre. We have obtained permission of Congress to locate it in Louisiana. Locations can be found adjacent to the city of New Orleans, in the island of New Orleans and in its vicinity, the value of which cannot be calculated. I hope it will induce him to come over and settle there with his family." It seems that when Louisiana was acquired Jefferson at first wished to appoint Lafayette as governor. But there were too many difficulties in the way.

At Washington during his Presidency Jefferson enjoyed excellent health. He rode usually from one to three in the afternoon, when he was often to be met galloping along the roads that led out of Washington. For the four fine bays which drew his coach he paid sixteen hundred dollars; but he seldom used it. On his journeys to and from Monticello he drove in a phaeton, or in a one-horse chaise of his own device and construction.

At the close of his first administration, as Tucker remarks, Jefferson's popularity was 'at its meridian.' Unexampled quiet reigned over the United States. The fear of being again entangled in the European war had passed. Party spirit seemed to be evaporating. The Federalists showed few signs of life, save in "harmless jibes at Jefferson's philosophy, or the impotent vituperations of a few Federal prints, of which one after another died a natural death for want of the aliment which first called them into existence." One of the best jokes against the President came from a digest of information about Louisiana, communicated to Congress, which stated on the authority of traders that a thousand miles up the Missouri



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was a salt mountain eighty miles long and forty wide composed of solid rock salt without a tree or even a shrub upon it. This fable, and the probability of mammoths being found walking about the new territory — at which the President had hinted in his notes — gave a good deal of amusement; and the credulity of a natural philosopher became a favorite topic with critics who were otherwise gravelled for lack of matter.

## CHAPTER II

JEFFERSON'S SECOND ADMINISTRATION — 1805-1809

Litusque rogamus  
Innocuum, et cunctis undamque auramque patentem.  
— VIRGIL

‘We implore  
Free air, free ocean and a harmless shore.’  
— SELDEN

ON March 4, 1805, Jefferson stood a second time to take the oath of office as President of the United States. He was then in his sixty-second year, having just completed a term of peaceful and prosperous achievements unparalleled before or since in American history. He had acquired the most valuable territory ever added by treaty to the Union; and yet at the same time, with the surpluses produced by thrifty finance, he had abolished all internal taxes, and had provided for a rapid extinction of the debt; he had maintained neutrality with success, and had brought a great majority of the nation to support his policy.

His second Inaugural Address, less ornate than the first, reviewed what had been done. In the transaction of foreign affairs they had cultivated the friendship of all nations, cherishing mutual interests and intercourse on fair and equal terms: “We are firmly convinced, and we act on that conviction, that with nations, as with individuals, our interests, soundly calculated, will ever be

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found inseparable from our moral duties." At home they had effected steady reductions of the public debt, and he looked forward to the day when, redemption being finally effected, "the revenue thereby liberated may, by a just repartition among the states, and a corresponding amendment to the constitution, be applied, in time of peace," to internal improvements, while in time of war it would enable the country to meet within the year all its expenses, without encroaching on the rights of future generations by burdening them with the debts of the past. War would then be but a suspension of useful works, and the return to a state of peace would be a return to the progress of improvement.

In spite of newspaper calumnies he did not repent of the freedom of the press. It was not, he wrote, "uninteresting to the world, that an experiment should be fairly and fully made, whether freedom of discussion, unaided by power, is not sufficient for the propagation and protection of truth — whether a government, conducting itself in the true spirit of the constitution, with zeal and purity, and doing no act which it would be unwilling the whole world should witness, can be written down by falsehood and defamation." The results, he thought, had amply justified their confidence. The verdict of the country was "honourable to those who had served them, and consolatory to the friend of man, who believes he may be trusted with his own affairs."

Of the future he had written with cheerful confidence to a friend soon after his re-election: —

"The new century opened itself by committing us on a boisterous ocean; but all is now subsiding; peace is smoothing our path at home and abroad; and if we are not wanting in the practice of justice and moderation, our tranquillity and prosperity may be preserved until

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increasing numbers shall leave us nothing to fear from abroad. . . . Should we be able to preserve this state of public happiness, and to see our citizens, whom we found so divided, rally to their genuine principles, I shall hope yet to enjoy the comfort of that general good will which has been so unfeelingly wrested from me, and to sing at the end of my term the *Nunc dimittis Domine*, with a satisfaction leaving nothing to desire but the last great audit."

But clouds were already blowing up to darken these fair prospects. Dissensions arose in the republican camp. Only two months after his second Inauguration the President remarked with infinite pain on local schisms, which had divided the republican party in Pennsylvania and New York. "The main body of both sections mean well," he wrote, "but their good intentions will produce great public evil." A minority would end in coalition with the Federalists and some compromise of principle; but the administration would pursue its course steadily, knowing nothing of these 'family dissensions.'

Among the dissidents the most dangerous was John Randolph of Roanoke, touchy, ambitious, resentful, eloquent, and eccentric. Chosen to manage an impeachment, before the Senate, of Samuel Chase, a Justice of the Supreme Court, for expressing party opinions from the Bench, Randolph had bungled the case badly. When the impeachment failed,<sup>1</sup> he blamed Jefferson for a failure which was all his own, and recognising that he had lost his chance of the Presidential nomination Randolph set himself with a few Republican malcontents to embarrass the administration.

These rifts in the republican lute might not have mat-

<sup>1</sup> The acquittal was pronounced on March 1, 1805, by Aaron Burr, who had returned from hiding after his duel (July 11, 1804) with Hamilton, and was still Vice President, though he was about to be succeeded in that office by Clinton.

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tered much but for the situation which was developing abroad. Jefferson had begun his first administration in a world at peace. He began his second in a world at war. In this "battle of the lions and tigers," as Jefferson called it — perhaps "sharks and tigers" would have been nearer the mark — the feelings and rights of neutrals counted for little or nothing. For a time, however, relations with England remained friendly; and when Fox succeeded Pitt, in January, 1806, Jefferson's hopes of a good understanding with the British Government rose high.<sup>1</sup> But they were soon to be dashed to the ground by Fox's untimely death.

In Jefferson's second administration the place of Lincoln, the Attorney-General, who resigned, was filled after some delay by John Breckenridge of Kentucky. Madison and Gallatin were still the mainstays of a Cabinet, whose first task was to settle if possible the boundaries of the Louisiana purchase. Spain had protested against the transfer of the territory to the United States, and steadily refused to admit that she had sold any part of Florida. On this point, after protracted discussions, Talleyrand had written to General Armstrong, the American Minister in Paris, on December 21, 1804, that Florida was not in the cession. Meanwhile Monroe, who had been sent to Madrid, pressed in vain for a settlement. The Spanish Government put him off from month to month, professing perfect indifference as to whether the result was peace or war. Finally in the middle of May, 1805, Monroe demanded his passports and returned to London in disgust, having accomplished nothing. To overcome Spanish obstinacy and secure Florida Jefferson now began to con-

<sup>1</sup> "An English ascendancy on the ocean," so he wrote to Monroe on May 4, 1806, "is safer for us than that of France."

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template an alliance with England, and wrote to Madison (Monticello, August 27, 1805):—

"Whatever ill humour may at times have been expressed against us by individuals of that country, the first wish of every Englishman's heart is to see us once more fighting by their sides against France; nor could the King or his Ministers do an act so popular as to enter into an alliance with us. The nation would not weigh the consideration by grains and scruples. They would consider it as the price and pledge of an indissoluble friendship."

In return for such advantages England might guarantee Louisiana and the Floridas. His idea was a provisional treaty "to come into force on the event of our being engaged in war with either France or Spain during the present war in Europe." Besides, "it being generally known to France and Spain that we had entered into a treaty with England, would probably ensure us a peaceful and immediate settlement of both points."

The idea of an alliance with England was dropped for the time being. Madison was against it, and Gallatin thought that the United States had made pretensions which she was not strong enough to maintain. But Jefferson nearly gained his object. After further negotiations in Paris it was agreed that Spain should deliver up the Floridas in return for a payment of five million dollars. Unfortunately events which Jefferson could not have foreseen, and was powerless to prevent or control, upset his calculations.

Congress was to meet in December, 1805, to find the money and ratify the Florida arrangement. But while Monroe was absent in Madrid, the British parliament had passed a series of measures against neutral trade with the French and Spanish colonies; and by Sir William Scott's prize court decision in the *Essex case* (July, 1805)

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American ships were practically deprived of any share in that trade. As a result scores of American ships were seized without warning and declared lawful prize. Monroe remonstrated with the British authorities, but in vain. At last he wrote to Madison that the government ought to take strong measures against Spain, France, and England simultaneously!

After much discussion in the Cabinet it had been decided to send two messages to Congress, one public, the other secret, in order to carry out a suggestion from Talleyrand that they should alarm Spain "by a vigorous language and conduct," and at the same time procure from Congress the money needed to negotiate for Florida. The opening paragraph of Jefferson's public message (December 3, 1805) showed how much the atmosphere had changed for the worse since March. The commotions in Europe had begun to threaten the peace and security of America: —

"Our coasts have been infested and our harbours watched by private armed vessels, some of them without commissions, some with illegal commissions, others with those of legal form but committing piratical acts beyond the authority of their commissions. They have captured in the very entrance of our harbours, as well as on the high seas, not only the vessels of our friends coming to trade with us, but our own also. They have carried them off under pretence of legal adjudication, but not daring to approach a court of justice they have plundered and sunk them by the way, or in obscure places where no evidence could arise against them; maltreated the crews, and abandoned them in boats in the open sea or on desert shores without food or covering. These enormities appearing to be unreachd by any control of their sovereigns, I have found it necessary to equip a force to cruise within our own seas, to arrest all vessels of these descriptions found hovering on our coast within the limits of the Gulf Stream, and to bring the offenders in for trial as pirates. The same system of hovering on our coast and harbours under colour of seeking enemies has been also carried

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on by public armed ships, to the great annoyance and oppression of our commerce."

New principles, too, had been "interloped into the law of nations, founded neither in justice nor the usage or acknowledgement of nations." According to these a belligerent took to himself a commerce with his own enemy which he denied to a neutral, on the ground of its aiding that enemy in the war. This of course referred to the *Essex case* decision, and to the presence of a British blockading squadron outside New York harbour.

Turning to the question of Florida he said that all attempts to negotiate had been unsuccessful. The United States had avoided changing the state of things by taking new posts in the disputed territories, but Spain had recently made inroads on American territory, and had seized and plundered American citizens, and troops had had to be ordered to the frontier. "Some of these injuries may perhaps admit a peaceable remedy. Where that is competent it is always the most desirable. But some of them are of a nature to be met by force only, and all of them may lead to it." The President therefore recommended "such preparations as circumstances call for."

This message was interpreted by many as a prelude to war. Insurance rates went up immediately, and private vessels began to arm. The Federalist newspapers applauded the President's warlike tone, and Congress waited anxiously for the secret message. On December 6 they met behind closed doors to receive a communication much less alarming than they had been led to expect. It was "a Confidential Message on Spanish Spoliations," reviewing recent diplomacy and the attitude of France, which had been the deciding factor throughout:—



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"We have reason to believe that she was disposed to effect a settlement on a plan analogous to what our ministers had proposed, and so comprehensive as to remove as far as possible the grounds of future collision and controversy on the Eastern as well as Western side of the Mississippi. The present crisis in Europe is favourable for pressing such a settlement, and not a moment should be lost in availing ourselves of it. Should it pass unimproved, our situation would become much more difficult. Formal war is not necessary. It is not probable it will follow. But the protection of our citizens, the spirit and honor of our country, require that force should be interposed to a certain degree. It will probably contribute to advance the object of peace."

Nothing was said in the message itself about a vote of money; but Randolph as Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means was expected to move that five million dollars be appropriated for the purchase of Florida. Instead of so doing he turned sharply against the Administration. Though he had supported the Louisiana purchase, he condemned this as "a mean attempt to bribe one nation to join in robbing another," and told the President he would never consent to vote the money, partly because it had not been asked for in the message, and partly because such a transaction was a "disgrace." For over a month he held the majority at bay. The Cabinet could do nothing, though every day's delay prejudiced the success of their plan. Not until January 14 was the money finally voted by the House; and when Madison was able to authorise his representative in Paris to offer five million dollars for Florida and Texas up to the Colorado, it was too late. Either Talleyrand had acted without authority, or Napoleon had changed his mind. The negotiations dragged on for a few months, and then petered out.

Next came the question of British depredations on

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American commerce. The President sent in the petitions and other papers relating to the seizures of American merchant vessels without comment. They were referred to a Committee of the Senate which declared them an "encroachment on national independence," and recommended that a list of imports from Britain should be prohibited, in retaliation. In the House two resolutions were introduced, one for an embargo on all British products, and another for a restricted but still extensive list of prohibitions. Randolph opposed all retaliatory measures on the ground that war was not for a moment to be thought of, and argued that the best policy was submission to the British decrees. This public rebellion of a party leader for a time disorganised the House. Nothing quite like it had been seen before in American politics. Randolph dragged the Spanish negotiations into the light, assailed every member of the Cabinet, and tried to sow distrust between the President and his friends. For two months confusion reigned. At last, however, his own extravagance and bitterness lost him the support of nearly all who had followed him over the Florida bill, and he was left with only half a dozen supporters. The rebellion had failed. Jefferson's authority was again supreme, but Randolph had stopped the Florida project, and had provided foreign ministers in Washington with diplomatic material against the President.

In April Jefferson wrote to Wilson C. Nicholas urging him to return to the Senate, where a minority of Federalists skillfully led was causing a good deal of embarrassment. Then he went on to describe the situation in the lower House: —

"The House of Representatives is as well disposed as I ever saw one. The defection of so prominent a leader threw them into dismay and con-

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fusion for a moment; but they soon rallied to their own principles, and let him go off with five or six followers only. One half of these are from Virginia. His late declaration of perpetual opposition to this administration drew off a few others, who at first had joined him, supposing his opposition occasional only, and not systematic. The alarm the House has had from this schism has produced a rallying together and a harmony, which carelessness and security had begun to endanger. On the whole, this little trial of the firmness of our representatives in their principles . . . has added much to my confidence in the stability of our government."

On March 25, the House had adopted a non-importation bill against England to go into operation in November; and the President, in response to the Senate's request, sent William Pinckney to London to act with Monroe in fresh negotiations with England. On April 22, what has been described as the stormiest session ever witnessed in Congress closed, and John Randolph went home, to assail the administration under the pseudonym of 'Decius' in the *Richmond Enquirer*. Jefferson met these attempts to create dissension in the party with admirable tact and temper. He was always ready to make friendly advances to those who had differed from him. When a set was made against Gallatin, the President wrote to his colleague:—

"The machinations of the last session, to put you at cross questions with us all, were so obvious as to be seen at the very first glance of every eye. . . . I observe in the papers lately, new attempts to revive this stale artifice, and that they squint more directly towards you and myself. I cannot, therefore, be satisfied, till I declare to you explicitly, that my affections and confidence in you are nothing impaired, and that they cannot be impaired by means so unworthy the notice of candid and honorable minds. I make the declaration that no doubts or jealousies, which often beget the facts they fear, may find a moment's harbour in either of our minds. I have so much reliance on the superior good sense and candor of all those associated with me, as to be satisfied they will not suffer either friend or foe to sow tares among us."

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The summer passed more or less peacefully, though disturbing rumours began to circulate about Aaron Burr who was plotting mischief on the Western frontier. These Jefferson chose to ignore. He had indeed more important matters in hand, and was not anxious to revive antagonism by anything that might be construed as harshness towards Burr.

On the Continent Armstrong was waiting the French pleasure in the matter of Florida, and in England Monroe was trying to negotiate a treaty which should accommodate the interests of American commerce to the claims of the British navy, especially in regard to impressment, no easy matter. The death of Pitt, however, and the formation of a new ministry, with Charles James Fox as Foreign Secretary, seemed to augur well for its success. On May 4th, 1806, Jefferson wrote to Monroe:—

"The late change in the ministry I consider as insuring us a just settlement of our differences, and we ask no more. In Mr. Fox, personally, I have more confidence than in any man in England, and it is founded in what, through unquestionable channels, I have had opportunities of knowing of his honesty and his good sense. While he shall be in the administration, my reliance on that government will be solid. . . . No two countries upon earth have so many points of common interest and friendship; and their rulers must be great bunglers indeed, if, with such dispositions, they break them asunder. The only rivalry that can arise is on the ocean. England may, by petty larceny thwartings, check us on that element a little, but nothing she can do will retard us there one year's growth."

Unfortunately, a fortnight after Pinckney's arrival in London Fox died. From this moment reactionary views began again to prevail in England. It was decided that the friendship and commerce of neutrals should be sacrificed to sea power and prize money.

So far, there had been no interruption to the growing

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prosperity of the Union. Twenty-four millions of debt had been paid off, and the Treasury had a substantial surplus. The people as a whole were contented, and were solidly behind the President in his desire to avoid war. Jefferson's Sixth Annual Message (Dec. 2, 1806) was designed to strengthen this temper, and to present a domestic policy on which Republican and Federalist could unite.

After reviewing foreign affairs in a hopeful tone, with no hint of the menace conveyed in his last message, he turned to home affairs. At last an opportunity had come for putting an end to the importation of slaves: —

"I congratulate you, fellow citizens, on the approach of the period at which you may interpose your authority constitutionally to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all further participation in those violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country have long been eager to proscribe. Although no law you may pass can take prohibitory effect till the first day of the year 1808, yet the intervening period is not too long to prevent, by timely notice, expeditions which cannot be completed before that day."

He then announced that the extinction of the national debt was in sight. In a year or two a surplus would begin to accumulate in the Treasury. What should they do with the money thus released? He thought that the proceeds of duties on the luxuries of the rich should be applied to public education, roads, rivers, canals, and such other objects of public improvement as it might be thought proper to add to the constitutional enumeration of federal powers. "By these operations new channels of communication will be opened between the States; the lines of separation will disappear, their interests will be identified, and their union cemented by new and indissoluble ties."

He suggested that Congress should found and endow,

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either with money or lands, a national university. "A public institution can alone supply those sciences which, though rarely called for, are yet necessary to complete the circle, all the parts of which contribute to the improvement of the country, and some of them to its preservation."

Finally he advised Congress of the perilous situation in Europe and of the delicate relations in which the United States stood to the belligerent powers:—

"Our duty is, therefore, to act upon things as they are, and to make a reasonable provision for whatever they may be. Were armies to be raised whenever a speck of war is visible on our horizon, we never should have been without them. Our resources would have been exhausted on dangers which have never happened, instead of being reserved for what is really to take place."

"Nowhere in all the long course of Mr. Jefferson's great career," says Henry Adams, "did he appear to better advantage than when in his message of 1806, he held out to the country and the world that view of his ultimate hopes and aspirations for national development, which was, as he then trusted, to be his last bequest to mankind":—

"Had Congress been able or willing to follow promptly his advice, many difficulties would have been overcome before the year 1810, which seemed twenty years later to bar the path of national progress. Congress indeed, never succeeded in rising to the level of Jefferson's hopes and wishes; it realised but a small part of the plan which he traced, and what it did was done with little system."

The paragraph in the Message relating to the Slave Trade was immediately referred to a special Committee, which in mid-December reported a Bill declaring the importation of negro slaves unlawful. It imposed a fine on the importer, with forfeiture of ship and cargo, and authorised the President to employ armed vessels in enforce-

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ing the law. This measure, long and fiercely contested, widened the breach between southern republicans and northern democrats. It was during these debates that John Randolph predicted that the future dividing line in American politics would be not between Federalism and Republicanism but between slavery and anti-slavery. The Bill passed by a small majority and was approved by the President on March 2nd, 1807, more than thirty years after his denunciation of this infamous traffic was struck out of the Declaration of Independence. Meanwhile Jefferson and Gallatin had worked out an ambitious scheme of internal improvements, to be defrayed from the large surpluses which now seemed assured. Their projects embraced a great system of canals and roads linking east to west. Jefferson realised that quick and easy communication between the different parts of the country would knit the nation together and prevent the separation which many feared. Congress voted money for some of these projects, and a number of surveys were made. But before the end of 1807 their attention was diverted from their own land to the troubles of the ocean and the outrages of European belligerents on the rights and commerce of neutrals.

On the last day of the Session (March, 1807) a messenger arrived with the treaty, which Monroe and Pinckney had negotiated, but only by disregarding their instructions. It was so adverse to American interests that Jefferson refused even to submit it to the Senate. He would have preferred himself to let further negotiations for a treaty drop, and to "back out . . . as well as we can, letting it die away insensibly." Madison, however, was anxious for a further attempt, and fresh instructions were sent to London, much to the disgust of Monroe, who

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wanted to return home in the hope of securing the republican nomination for the Presidency.

The trial of Aaron Burr on a charge of high treason absorbed public interest during the spring and early summer. For a year and a half, as we have seen, Jefferson refused to pay much attention to the rumours of Burr's activities in the West; but in November, 1806, he issued a proclamation for his arrest on a charge of conspiring against Spain. What Burr really intended has never been made quite clear. He was a shifty conspirator of the Catilinarian type, and his plans changed almost from hour to hour. At a later date, when all the known facts were before him, Jefferson described Burr's enterprise as "the most extraordinary since the days of Don Quixote," and "so extravagant that those who know his understanding, would not believe it, if the proofs admitted doubt. He has meant to place himself on the throne of Montezuma, and extend his empire to the Alleghany, seizing on New Orleans as the instrument of compulsion for our western states."<sup>1</sup> But Burr had overestimated the discontent in the West, and Jefferson declared in another letter "that not a single native Creole of Louisiana, and but one American, settled there before the delivery of the country to us, were in his interest. His partisans were made up of fugitives from justice, or from their debts, who had flocked there from other parts of the United States, . . . and of adventurers and speculators."

In March, 1807, Burr was brought to Richmond for trial. Unfortunately for the government Chief Justice John Marshall, Jefferson's inveterate adversary, pre-

<sup>1</sup> In a letter of July 14, 1807, Jefferson states clearly that Burr's plot was to separate the Western States and join them to Mexico, placing himself at the head of this new empire.



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sided over the court, having previously attended a private dinner given in Burr's honour at Richmond.<sup>1</sup> The defence soon resolved itself into an attack on the President, and Marshall summoned Jefferson to appear in Court at the demand of Burr's attorney, holding that a subpoena could be enforced against the President. Jefferson very properly refused to attend. It is a singular case of the President overruling the Chief Justice on a question of mixed law and administration. Compliance would have put the executive at the mercy of the judiciary. Jefferson felt that Marshall and the Federalists were patronising a plotter against the Republic solely in order to embarrass and discredit a republican administration. His letter of June 20, 1807, to George Hay, who led the prosecution of Burr for the Government, puts the true view of subpoenas with admirable force:—

“Let us apply the Judge's own doctrine to the case of himself and his brethren. The Sheriff of Henrico summons him from the bench to quell a riot somewhere in his county. The Federal judge is by the general law a part of the *posse* of the State sheriff. Would the judge abandon major duties to perform lesser ones? Again the court of Orleans or Maine commands by subpoenas the attendance of all the judges of the Supreme Court. Would they abandon their posts as judges and the interests of millions committed to them to serve the purposes of a single individual? The leading principle of our constitution is the independence of the legislature, executive, and judiciary of each other; and none are more jealous of this than the judiciary. But would the executive be independent of the judiciary if he were subject to the *commands* of the latter and to imprisonment for disobedience; if the several courts could bandy him from pillar to post, keep him constantly trudging from north to south, and east to west, and withdraw him entirely from his constitutional duties?”

<sup>1</sup> George Tucker, who was present at the dinner, says that Marshall regretted this impropriety.

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Marshall's frivolous remark: "it is apparent that the president's duties as Chief Magistrate do not demand his whole time, and are not unremitting" was rightly resented by Jefferson, who, in this matter at any rate, with general approval, supported the dignity of the Chief Magistrate and "the intention of the Constitution that each branch should be independent of the others," against the impertinence of the Chief Justice. In the end Burr was discharged, treason not being proven.<sup>1</sup> Committed for trial in Ohio on a minor charge, he gave bail for 3,000 dollars but forfeited his recognizances and fled to England. After a life of suffering and disappointment there and on the Continent this strange and sinister figure returned to New York, where he was allowed to practise law in obscurity until his death in 1836.

On June 22, an event took place which threw the trial of Burr into the shade. The British frigate *Leopard* stopped the American frigate *Chesapeake* outside Hampton Roads, and demanded the surrender of certain deserters believed to be on board. The commander of the *Chesapeake* refused to allow his crew to be examined. The *Leopard* thereupon fired three broadsides, killing and wounding several men, boarded the ship, and seized four seamen, one of whom proved to be a deserter from the British Navy.

An outburst of indignation followed when details of this affair became known. "Never since the battle of Lexington," wrote Jefferson, "have I seen this country in such a state of exasperation as at present; and even that did not produce such unanimity. The Federalists

<sup>1</sup> The verdict of the Jury was curiously worded: — "We of the Jury say that Aaron Burr is not proved to be guilty under this indictment by any evidence submitted to us."

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themselves coalesce with us as to the object, though they will return to their trade of censuring every measure taken to obtain it. 'Reparation for the past, and security for the future' is our motto; but whether they will yield it freely, or will require resort to non-intercourse, or to war is yet to be seen." The President at once summoned his Cabinet to Washington, and on July 2 a proclamation was issued ordering all armed vessels of Great Britain out of American waters, and prohibiting the issuing of supplies to them. The frigate *Revenge* was despatched to England to demand a disavowal of the act. Until it was known whether or no the attack was officially authorised, nothing could be done except to prepare for war. Gallatin drew up a report showing what was needed and the amount of money in the Treasury for the purpose, and recommended the calling of Congress; but Jefferson, who knew that popular passion is the worst of all advisers, preferred to wait.

A letter to W. H. Cabell, then Governor of Virginia, June 29, 1807, immediately after the arrival of an officer of the *Chesapeake* with details of the affair, shows that from the very first Jefferson took the ground that the executive ought not to commit Congress. In the meantime it could exercise its powers to prevent future insults in American harbours and claim satisfaction for the past:

"This will leave Congress free to decide whether war is the most efficacious mode of redress in our case, or whether, having taught so many other useful lessons to Europe we may not add that of showing them that there are peaceable means of repressing injustice by making it the interest of the aggressor to do what is just and abstain from future wrong."

If a period ever arrives when the civilized nations of the world are in reality as well as in form representative democracies, their governments will be composed of

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statesmen who, like Jefferson, recognize that questions of war and peace must be decided by parliament and Congress, and that it is the duty of the government as trustees of the lives and fortunes of the citizens to do nothing which can possibly precipitate war or prejudice the full freedom of the representative assembly to which the decision is entrusted. When that day arrives — the day hopefully anticipated by Immanuel Kant in his essay on Perpetual Peace — a real obstacle will have been erected across the path by which nations in modern times have so often been led like sheep to the slaughter. Jefferson's self-restraint in refraining from warlike action at this moment and his successful recommendation of the embargo policy will constitute — in the eyes of those who accept the Sermon on the Mount as applicable to the moral conduct of nations — a shining example of Christian and democratic statesmanship. His letters in the following weeks and months testify to the practical ability and resourcefulness of his mind in this the most trying emergency of his life. At the height of the excitement (July 9, 1807) the President reminded his friends and supporters that law as well as prudence demanded delay. "Both reason and the usage of nations required we should give Great Britain an opportunity of disavowing and repairing the insult of their officers. It gives us at the same time an opportunity of getting home our vessels, our property, and our seamen." When they had heard from London it would be time to summon Congress. Excitement would then have cooled. Whatever happened, the nation's representatives must not act in the dark. At the same time he urged Monroe to make use of the opportunity to demand the cessation of impressments. But Canning, who had joined the Duke of Portland's Adminis-

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tration as Foreign Secretary, refused to negotiate further over the American Treaty. He did indeed disavow the attack on the *Chesapeake*, but at the same time he issued a proclamation commanding naval officers to seize British deserters on foreign ships wherever they might be found, and warning British-born residents of other countries that naturalization would not relieve British subjects of their duties. In the face of this Monroe could do no more, and on November 14, he sailed from Plymouth. On that same day the British Orders in Council were published in London.

It will be convenient to reserve for another chapter Jefferson's attitude to the naval aggressions of Great Britain. But before passing to this last and most desperate problem of his Administration let us glance for a moment at his personal correspondence.

Thomas Paine, who had visited him at Monticello, wrote in the spring of 1805 to tell the President that he had taken a farm and was building. Jefferson may have been glad that this rather embarrassing supporter had turned to agricultural pursuits. At any rate there is a letter of June 5, 1805, congratulating Paine on this retirement. Paine, who was something of an architect and engineer,<sup>1</sup> had built an open room on the second story of his house. Jefferson much doubts whether it will answer expectations:—

"There will be a few days in the year in which it will be delightful, but not many. Nothing but trees or Venetian blinds can protect it from the sun. The semi-cylindrical roof you propose will have advantages. You know it has been practised on the Cloth Market at Paris. De

<sup>1</sup> In the autumn of 1807 he sent the President a model of a gun boat. "It has all the simplicity and ingenuity," wrote Jefferson, "which generally mark your inventions."

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Lorme, the inventor, shows many forms of roofs in his book to which it is applicable. I have used it at home for a dome, being 120 degrees of an oblong octagon, and in the capitol we unite two quadrants of a sphere by a semi cylinder; all framed in De Lorme's manner."

In the busiest moments of his Presidency Jefferson could not resist a problem of architecture.

In these years Russia under the Czar Alexander was the chief European support of neutral rights. Alexander sent his bust to Jefferson. Jefferson replied with a present of books on the Constitution of the United States, and with a friendly letter urging the Czar at "the approaching pacification to incorporate into the treaty a correct definition of the rights of neutrals on the high seas."

We have seen how little store Jefferson set by clerks and secretaries. As he was in the habit of thinking for himself and writing his own letters, he was not fond of committing his confidential thoughts to third parties. This explains his delight in the polygraph, which he thought, "the finest invention of the present age, and so much superior to the copying machine that the latter will never be continued a day by anyone who tries the polygraph." In presenting one to a friend he remarked: "As a secretary, which copies for us what we write without the power of revealing it, I find it a most precious possession for a man in public business." Though he no longer had time for inventions of his own, Jefferson was much pleased to receive in May, 1807, the gold medal of the Society of Agriculture at Paris for his improved plough, together with the title of Foreign Associate.

Most of his correspondence from 1806 to his retirement from the presidency is taken up with Burr's conspiracy, the British attack on the *Chesapeake*, the Orders in Council, Napoleon's edicts, and the embargo. Peace for him-

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self and peace for his country were more and more in his thoughts. To his "dear and ancient friend" Count Deodati, who had found a quiet and safe retreat, he wrote, March 29, 1807: "Were I in Europe *pax et panis* would certainly be my motto. Wars and contentions indeed fill the pages of history with more matter; but more blessed is that nation whose silent course of happiness furnishes nothing for history to say. This is what I ambition for my own country, and what it has fortunately enjoyed for now upwards of twenty years, while Europe has been in constant volcanic eruption." Having himself now performed his forty years service — "my *quadragena stipendia*" — he was entitled to discharge. "I have therefore requested my fellow citizens to think of a successor for me, to whom I shall deliver the public concerns with greater joy than I received them. I have the consolation too of having added nothing to my private fortune during my public service, and of retiring with hands as clean as they are empty."

A letter to William Short (June 12, 1807) deserves notice because it describes Jefferson's Cabinet practice. A question had arisen whether an umpire should be appointed to assist "our discordant negotiators at Paris": —

"I made it therefore a subject of consultation with my coadjutors, as is our usage. For our government, although in theory subject to be directed by the unadvised will of the President, is and from its origin has been, a very different thing in practice. The minor business in each department is done by the Head of the department, on consultation with the President alone. But all matters of importance or difficulty are submitted to all the Heads of departments composing the Cabinet; sometimes by the President's consulting them separately and successively, as they happen to call on him; but in the greatest cases, by calling them together, discussing the subject maturely, and finally taking the vote, in which the President counts himself but as one. So that in

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all important cases the executive is, in fact, a directory, which certainly the President might control; but of this there was never an example, either in the first or the present administration. I have heard, indeed, that my predecessor sometimes decided things against his council."

In this case Jefferson consulted his colleagues separately and finding them adverse he decided not to appoint a third negotiator, though he had been inclined to favour the idea. It is said that some modern Presidents have treated their Cabinet officers as mere clerks, and have been much under the influence of private secretaries and unofficial advisers. This is in sharp contrast to the habitual practice of Washington and Jefferson, which was as near that of an English Cabinet as the constitutional differences between the two systems would admit.

Jefferson was curiously indifferent to self-advertisement, as well as to ceremonial. He refused to allow public celebrations of his birthday, and even contrived to keep the date private. When asked to make a tour in the north, following a precedent set by Washington, he said that he could not arrogate to himself the claims Washington had on the public homage. "I confess," he wrote June 19, 1807, to a republican governor, "that I am not reconciled to the idea of a chief magistrate parading himself through the several states as an object of public gaze, and in quest of an applause which, to be valuable, should be purely voluntary."



## CHAPTER III

### AMERICAN TRADE WITH ENGLAND

#### EMBARGO OR WAR

They say that wars have been justly commenced upon denial of port, trade and commerce. — SELDEN's *Mare Clausum*.

A GENERATION emerging from the unparalleled slaughter, confusion, and ruin caused by the most calamitous war of modern times is impelled by an instinct of self-preservation to study every device by which another may be averted. We have learnt by experience — what history should have taught us — that a great war means conscription of life and wealth, public bankruptcy, and the confiscation of private property by taxation or debasement of money. After such a conflict an almost universal longing for peace prevails except among those whose professional career is dependent on war, or whose business is concerned with the provision of armaments. But in a few years, when the horrors of 1914-1918 have begun to fade, the danger will reappear, unless the peaceful mood is reinforced by study and reflection, and unless new barriers of law are erected strong enough not only to curb the natural pugnacity of mankind but to bring statesmanship and diplomacy into line with the moral and economic interests of civilisation. To this task of saving the world from a repetition of Armageddon —

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the most pressing and important of all that engage the hearts and minds of good men — biography and history contribute much by way of precept, experience, warning, or example. John Stuart Mill used to advise his disciples to study Condorcet's life of the 'divine Turgot.' But the inspiration drawn from Turgot's character is dimmed by the melancholy circumstances of his failure. In the case of Jefferson we see how a suppler statesman encompassed by difficulties, different indeed, but not less formidable, successfully maintained peace with honour during a world war; and for eight years, while European rulers loaded debt and taxes on the backs of their wretched subjects, went on relieving his countrymen of the burdens and obligations that had been incurred during their struggle for independence.

When Jefferson took office the Peace of Amiens was being negotiated;<sup>1</sup> and American commerce thus gained a breathing space from the sea pirates and land robbers of Europe, as Jefferson appropriately designated the belligerents. In spite of the illegal captures by French privateers and the naval rules of England which pressed so hardly on neutrals, American commerce was extending, and American shipowners were making fortunes out of the carrying trade. Returns presented to Congress in 1806 give the average annual imports and exports of the United States for the three years 1802, 1803, and 1804. From these it appears that the exports of America (in English money) amounted on an annual average to over fifteen millions sterling and the imports to close upon seventeen millions. Of American exports only £5,300,000, about one-third, went to Great Britain and the British Domin-

<sup>1</sup> The preliminaries were signed in London on October 1st, 1801, and the treaty at Amiens on March 27, 1802.

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ions, whereas of the imports £8,093,000, nearly half, came from Great Britain and its Dominions. Of America's imports about nine millions consisted of manufactured goods, such as cotton, wool, and silk textiles, leather, glass, iron, and paper. The detailed figures are truly remarkable. They show that, whereas the imports of French manufactures were only valued at £275,000 per annum, those of Britain were valued at £6,845,000. While British manufacturers furnished about three-fourths of the total value of foreign manufactured goods consumed by the people of the United States, those of France furnished only one twenty-fourth. These figures are worth recalling; if only to prove the colossal stupidity of the policy which the British government was now about to pursue, inspired by the Admiralty and supported with servile ingenuity by its Prize Courts. It may be added here that American trade and shipping continued to expand until 1807, in spite of the increasing difficulties caused by the war. In the year ending October 1, 1806, American exports rose to the record figure of 101 million dollars, of which 41 millions were American produce, and the remainder foreign goods re-exported. In the meantime the revenue of the United States, consisting almost exclusively of customs, mounted from 13 million dollars in 1805 to nearly 15 million dollars in 1806. This remarkable growth of revenue from customs was referred to by President Jefferson in his Annual Message to Congress on December 2, 1806. As the surpluses had become larger than the instalments of public debt which it was possible to repay to the creditors, the question arose (as we have seen) whether the excess revenue should be applied to reducing the tariff or to public utilities. Jefferson's answer was that customs duties on articles of general use might be

## American Trade with England

repealed, but that the majority of duties were on foreign luxuries purchased by the rich, and that the proceeds might well be devoted to internal improvement.

In spite of the profitable trade which American merchants and shipowners were enjoying the American government had serious grievances against Britain. They complained first that American merchant vessels were constantly boarded on the high seas and searched for British seamen, many of them deserters, who found the American service more profitable than their own. Secondly, they complained that their rights as neutrals were constantly violated by the seizure and condemnation of merchantmen engaged in lawful commerce. A third grievance was the infringement by British cruisers of American maritime jurisdiction along the American coast. Broadly speaking Great Britain, having established her supremacy at sea and being able to impose her own sea law upon neutrals, had until 1805 conceded to America the right to trade with the French Colonies for articles intended for domestic consumption, and even to re-export such articles to any foreign port not blockaded by the British fleet. A direct trade between the French Colonies and France was prohibited. An American ship was not permitted to carry French Colonial produce to France; but Sir William Scott<sup>1</sup> had decided in the case of the *Polly* (1800) that, when such goods were landed and had paid duties in a neutral country, the continuity of the voyage was broken and the trade legalised. Under this decision American shipping was carrying on a large trade until the summer of 1805, when Sir William Scott in the *Essex case* practically reversed his previous judgment by deciding that payment of duties in America was no evi-

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Stowell.

dence of *bona fide* importation, because under the revenue laws of the United States the merchant who imported to re-export was reimbursed, and even made a small profit on the transaction. This new decision played havoc with Americans who had embarked capital in what had hitherto been a legal and authorised trade. They now saw their vessels captured by British cruisers without any warning and brought into port for adjudication; and they cried out bitterly against the violence and inconsistency which had robbed them of their property for distribution in prize money. Congress after some hesitation passed in the spring of 1806 a Non-Importation law against British manufactures, which was to take effect in the following November. Its operation, however, was suspended by President Jefferson, who despatched Charles Pinckney with instructions to assist Monroe, then Minister in London, in negotiating a settlement with the British Government.

Meanwhile Napoleon, flushed with his triumphs over Austria and Prussia, conceived the notion of forcing England to capitulate by striking at her commerce with Europe. Accordingly he issued from Berlin on November 21, 1806, a decree, bombastically worded, prohibiting the inhabitants of France and her European 'allies' — that is to say, the states he had conquered — from all commerce with Great Britain, or from admitting any merchandise or produce of Britain, or of its colonies. As a result of this decree, quantities of British merchandise belonging to Dutch and German merchants were confiscated. It was robbery by proclamation, and from this time the French Empire, founded on injustice, could only be maintained by military violence. But the British Government, with an unwisdom which passes under-

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standing, proceeded to retaliate by inflicting upon their own manufacturers and merchants enormously greater sufferings than those which Napoleon's paper blockade — for it proved largely ineffective — could ever have caused.

The interruption of British commerce with Europe and the cutting off in a large measure of some continental markets for British goods, especially in Holland and Germany, made it all the more important to maintain and if possible to enlarge the American market for British manufactures. But Perceval and Canning stiffened their backs just when they should have been bending and conciliatory to America. They would make no concessions in the matter of impressment or of indemnities for captures under the *Essex* decision. It is not surprising that the treaty signed by Monroe and Pinckney was not acceptable to Jefferson.

But worse was to follow. On the 7th of January, 1807, the British government, cutting off its own nose to spite Napoleon, issued Orders in Council, prohibiting neutral vessels from trading between ports in the possession, or under the control, of the enemy. These Orders were intended to prevent the coasting trade of France and the subjugated countries of Europe from being carried on by neutral vessels; and, though neutral trade from a neutral port remained unmolested, they were bound to provoke America.

Napoleon retaliated at the end of August with further measures for tightening the blockade against British goods, and some American vessels were seized by the French authorities and confiscated. Again folly provoked folly. On November 11, 1807, new Orders in Council were issued by the Court of St. James. Every port from which British trade was excluded was declared to be in a state of

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blockade. All trade in the produce and manufactures of such countries was proclaimed illegal and the vessels employed in such trade made liable to seizure. Under these Orders American citizens and American ships might still trade with the French colonies, and they were still allowed to carry French colonial products to France, but only after calling at a British port and paying a British duty. The object of this last provision was to burden enemy products with charges which would make them more costly than the same commodities if exported from Great Britain to the Continent, thereby affording relief to the merchants and planters of the British West Indies. No sophistries could conceal the broad effect and intention of these measures — to strike a blow at the American carrying trade and protect British merchant vessels from neutral competition.

Perceval's policy was not carried without opposition in the Cabinet, the House of Commons, and the country. Like most of the bad things done by bad Ministers in the name of England, his Orders in Council were stoutly resisted. Lord Bathurst, then President of the Board of Trade, in a written opinion to the Prime Minister,<sup>1</sup> argued that Britain's ability to continue the war depended on the maintenance of its trade and revenues: —

“The enemy form one great military empire. The extent of country he covers does not render him so dependent on an export and import trade. The whole of that trade might perish, and he could still continue the war. If one third of ours were to fail we should soon be reduced to peace.”

But even the fear of being ‘reduced to peace’ did not move Perceval, nor did the argument that these edicts

<sup>1</sup> Unearthed by Henry Adams, the brilliant if sometimes captious historian of Jefferson's administrations.

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against neutral commerce would involve the risk of war with America and Russia — a forecast which was fulfilled to the letter; for a few months later Russia declared war on England, and in 1812, after prolonged controversy and suffering on both sides, America followed suit. No second-rate lawyer was ever more obtuse than Perceval, and the wit of Canning, his foreign Secretary, seldom issued in wisdom. Bathurst also pointed out that the Orders in Council would do far more damage to England than to France. In order, he said, to raise in France the price of luxuries like sugar, spices, and drugs, we were to exasperate and alienate our best customer and force him to manufacture the articles he was buying from us. Edward Baines, a contemporary writer well acquainted with the industries and commerce of Lancashire and the West Riding, put the case as follows: —

“The inevitable consequences of a war with America would be to cut off one of the most extensive and beneficial sources of British commerce. The exports of British manufactures to that country were immense, and the growing population and consequently increasing consumption would every year enlarge its demand upon English industry and ingenuity. The enterprise of the Trans-Atlantic merchants was perpetually enlarging their connections with distant markets already open to them, or discovering others still more remote, to which they conveyed the merchandise of Great Britain, pouring in return into her lap both the price of the commodity and the profits of the voyage. All these advantages would be not merely put to hazard but in many cases absolutely destroyed by an appeal to arms. The balance of property due from America to England amounted at this time to at least eight millions sterling; and the mere suspension of the payment of this sum would involve incalculable distresses. The calamity to which the West India Islands themselves might be exposed from a measure intended chiefly for their relief was also an important consideration, as American hostility would certainly inflict on these colonies new and formidable evils, by precluding those supplies of articles of the first necessity, which seemed incapable of being procured from any other



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quarter. The possible advantage of America, as a source of supply for timber and warlike stores, when the ports of the Baltic were likely to be shut against us, and even as a granary to Great Britain herself were not to be overlooked.”<sup>1</sup>

Petitions from the merchants of Liverpool, half of whose trade was with the United States, were presented by Henry Brougham, a rising lawyer of the new liberal school. In April, 1806, Brougham began to write in the *Edinburgh Review* against the British policy of capture at sea. He pointed out that in theory at any rate plunder had already been abandoned by armies in civilised warfare on land; and Brougham — though he must have known that prize money and other perquisites supplied the explanation — professed bewilderment that this enlightened policy, which forbids the seizure of private property for the sake of gain even on hostile territory, “should still be excluded from the scenes of maritime hostility; or why the plunder of industrious merchants, which is thought disgraceful on land, should still be accounted honourable at sea.” The reform of the laws of Naval Warfare proposed by Franklin and Jefferson after the War of Independence, though persistently thwarted by British opposition, made some progress in the nineteenth century towards Freedom of the Seas; and at the close of the Crimean War it was at last agreed by the Powers that privateering should be abolished, that neutral property in enemy ships, and enemy property in neutral ships, except contraband of war, should be free from capture. Cruising for prize money remained lawful in British naval warfare until a few months before the outbreak of war with Germany when Mr. Asquith’s government abolished prize money,

<sup>1</sup> See *Wars of the French Revolution* by Edward Baines, Book IV, Chapter 4.

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a reform which was speedily withdrawn after the war had begun.

Though opposition in the House of Commons and in the country failed to prevent the Orders in Council, or to bring about their immediate withdrawal, the existence of this large body of opinion, supported by merchants of such authority as Alexander Baring and Sir Francis Baring,<sup>1</sup> gave good ground for hope in America that a policy so suicidal would be reversed when the consequences predicted made themselves felt; and there can be no doubt that this consideration helped Jefferson to avoid war. It is one of the many illustrations that history affords of the services an Opposition can render in time of war by resisting the superfluous follies and excesses which an uncriticised government in such circumstances almost invariably commits.

In France there was no opposition to the Berlin decrees. Liberty was extinguished along with Fraternity. Despotism was in the saddle, freed by military success from all restraint. From Milan Napoleon issued, on November 23, another edict commanding that all vessels entering the ports of France after touching in England should be seized and confiscated with their cargoes; and on December 11, observing the British Orders of November, and the "infamous" principle, which British tyranny was asserting as a right, he went so far as to declare that any ship of any nation, which submitted to be searched by an English ship, or had paid any tax to the English government, was thereby denationalised and would be treated as English property and therefore as good and lawful prize for French privateers. The British Islands at the same time

<sup>1</sup> At a public dinner about this time Sir Francis Baring exasperated the Tories by proposing the toast of President Jefferson.

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were proclaimed to be in a state of blockade both by land and sea, whatever that might mean.

What was Jefferson to do? The United States might acquiesce, leaving their merchants and shipowners to carry on such trade as they could under the double burdens and dangers imposed upon them by French and British aggressions on neutral rights; but such a course would have been humiliating to the national spirit, and Jefferson himself was far too indignant to suggest it to Congress. In a special message of December 18, 1807, he drew attention to the "great and increasing dangers with which our vessels, our seamen, and merchandise are threatened on the high seas and elsewhere from the belligerent powers of Europe." Congress, he thought, would perceive the advantages of inhibiting the departure of American vessels from the ports of the United States and the necessity of making preparations "for whatever events may grow out of the present crisis." No one, it seems, except Jefferson had any intelligible or practicable policy between war and surrender. As he put it to Levi Lincoln, in March, 1808, the real alternative was between embargo and war, "and in fact it is the last card we have to play short of war." The other possible course he described later in the year to another correspondent as "submission and tribute." For, he went on, "all the Federal [*i.e.* Federalist] propositions for trading to the places permitted by the edicts of the belligerents result in fact in submission, although they do not choose to pronounce the naked word."

{ Both as a member of the Virginian assembly and as Governor of Virginia during the war Jefferson was familiar with the embargo policy; but it is obvious from his letters that one of his principal objects in recommending this

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device to Congress was to gain time, in the hope that either or both of the combatants would alter their policy, or that the increasing pressure of commercial misery in Europe would bring the war to an end. The situation, as he saw it in December, 1807, was thus depicted to a correspondent: "the whole world is laid under interdict by these two nations, and our vessels, their cargoes, and crews, are to be taken by the one or the other for whatever place they may be destined out of our own limits. If therefore, on leaving our harbours, we are certainly to lose them, is it not better for the vessels, cargoes, and seamen, to keep them at home?" The President's recommendation was at once discussed by both Houses in secret session, and a Bill laying an embargo was passed on December 22 by a majority of two to one in the House of Representatives, and by a much larger one in the Senate, despite the opposition of the Federalists and their new allies, the dissentient Republicans. By this law American vessels were prohibited from sailing for foreign ports and were confined to the coasting trade, and foreign vessels were prohibited from taking out cargoes from American ports. At the same time the Non-Importation law went into force. Thus British and French manufactures were excluded, and a stimulus given to the infant industries of the United States. Much mischief followed. The surplus products of America were deprived of their best markets and fell to half their usual price. Most kinds of clothing, machinery, tools, etc. became very dear, and while the expenses of the farmers increased, their purchasing power diminished. Thousands of sailors were thrown out of employment, and the manufacturers were unable to absorb at all rapidly this surplus labour for want of the necessary skill and machinery. It is a question whether

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the United States or the two belligerents felt the embargo most. But the misery of the manufacturing classes and labourers in England and on the continent was already so acute that only the weakness and impotence of the starving multitudes and the strength of the war organisations, aided by the patriotic antipathies which the great struggle had evoked, prevented the overthrow of the French tyranny and a popular revolution in Great Britain.

In the United States, on the other hand, there was no question of starvation; but under Jefferson's rule the freedom of the press remained unimpaired; and the classes who suffered most from the embargo, especially in New England, soon began to show their discontent under the inconveniences and losses imposed upon them by the embargo. The shipowners of the maritime states discovered means of evading the law, and in spite of Gallatin's efforts many vessels which sailed on coasting voyages contrived to make illicit gains by foreign commerce. Jefferson did all that was possible through the Governors and executive officers of the Union to check these evasions, and Congress passed supplementary legislation for the same purpose. Discontent spread. The law was opposed by force. There were riots in various towns, and in some cases armed resistance to the customs house officers. Troops were stationed along the Canadian border and gunboats patrolled the coast. At the same time the American Ministers in Paris and London were instructed that, if the Decrees and Orders were removed from American vessels, the embargo on trade with either or both the belligerents would be suspended. Both the French and English governments were given to understand in Jefferson's words that, unless they withdrew their orders and decrees, "there will arrive a time when our interests will render

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war preferable to a continuance of the embargo; that when that time arrives, if one has withdrawn and the other not, we must declare war against that other; if neither shall have withdrawn, we must take our choice of enemies between them.”<sup>1</sup> This is from a letter to Madison of March, 1808. Another in the following August to Governor Langdon remarks that the embargo measure had saved them from immediate war and had given time to call home “eighty millions of property, twenty or thirty thousand seamen and two thousand vessels.” Much of the idle capital, he thought, would go into manufactures; and there would be plenty of seamen to man a fleet of privateers “whenever our citizens shall prefer war to a longer continuance of the embargo.” Perhaps however, he added, the Englishman, tired of the solitude he has created on the ocean, may return to honest principles, and his brother robber on the land may see that the grapes are sour.

It is hardly possible to summarise in a few sentences the course of Jefferson’s mind during these anxious and critical months. He recognised fully from the first that the embargo could not be continued indefinitely, or any longer than the majority of people and Congress continued to acquiesce in the manifold inconveniences and losses which it imposed. It was in his eyes an experiment and a trial of national endurance. He saw that it was to the interest at any rate of England to withdraw the Orders in Council. He knew that the merchants of Liverpool and other places had presented petitions, and that the

<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the Federalists, as Jefferson wrote June 23, 1808, were all the time “endeavouring to convince England that we suffer more from the Embargo than they do, and if they will but hold out for a while we must abandon it.” The Federalist newspapers were full of this argument, and they were freely quoted by the Ministerial press in London.

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opposition in parliament had had the best of the argument. His own losses as a landowner must have been heavy, but he never swerved from the view that his policy was far preferable to war; and his only regret was that the action of the Federalists and the danger of serious disaffection in New England — where the 'Essex Junto'<sup>1</sup> led by Ames, Pickering, and Cabot began to threaten secession — forced him to abandon the embargo. It seems to have been the opinion of both Madison and Jefferson that, if the embargo had continued but a few months longer, the Orders in Council would have been withdrawn.

What actually happened was described by Jefferson to T. M. Randolph in a letter of February 7, 1809:—

"I thought Congress had taken their ground firmly for continuing their embargo until June and then war. But a sudden and unaccountable revolution of opinion took place the last week, chiefly among the New England and New York members, and in a kind of panic they voted the fourth of March for removing the Embargo, and by such a majority as gave all reason to believe they would not agree either to war or Non-Intercourse. This too, after we had become satisfied that the Essex Junto had found their expectations desperate of inducing the people there to either separation or forcible opposition. The majority of Congress however has now rallied to the removing the Embargo on the fourth of March, Non-Intercourse with France and Great Britain, trade everywhere else, and continued war preparations."

A clause for issuing letters of marque and reprisal, introduced by the Senate, was struck out by the House of Representatives. In the previous November, when the Congressional campaign was opening, Jefferson had decided, as his second presidential term was coming to an end, that it was not for him to press his own opinions upon

<sup>1</sup> So called from Essex County, Massachusetts, which was the centre of their machinations.

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Congress; and for a good reason: "I should not feel justified in directing measures which those who are to execute them would disapprove." Moreover, while the repeal of the embargo was under discussion, John Quincy Adams had called upon Jefferson in the character of a friend of the Constitution and of the Union with confidential information 'of the most unquestionable certainty' that certain citizens of New England were in negotiation with the British government in furtherance of an agreement that the New England states, without formally declaring their separation from the Union, should withdraw from all aid and obedience to the Federal government; in consideration of which their navigation and commerce would be freed from interruption by the British. Adams believed that a Convention would take place and that, in order to avert a catastrophe, the repeal of the Embargo was absolutely necessary. Jefferson in his old age described this interview to W. B. Giles, and added: "However reluctant I was to abandon the measure — a measure which, persevered in a little longer, we had subsequent and satisfactory assurance would have effected its object completely — from that moment, and influenced by that information, I saw the necessity of abandoning it, and instead of effecting our purpose by this peaceable weapon, we must fight it out or break the Union. I then recommended to yield to the necessity of a repeal of the Embargo, and to endeavour to supply its place by the best substitute in which they could procure a general concurrence."

An American, who coolly compares Jefferson's policy with that which afterwards under his successor precipitated the mischievous and futile war of 1812, will realise that Jefferson's statesmanship never shone brighter than



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in these dark and difficult days of the embargo policy, for which he has been so often and so unjustly assailed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Though the last year of his administration was crowded by misfortunes, Jefferson's supremacy was unaffected. He received letters from the legislatures of Pennsylvania, Vermont, New Jersey, Maryland, and Georgia, and the Senate of New York, and from the House of Delegates of Virginia begging him to serve a third term; and his friends were convinced that, had his principles permitted, he would have been secure of re-election. One address, which was presented to him on the sixth of February by the Legislature of Virginia, and was said to have been drafted by William Wirt, afterwards Attorney General in Monroe's Administration, must have given the President peculiar satisfaction; and with its recital of Jefferson's services this chapter may fitly conclude: —

"The General Assembly of your native state cannot close their session without acknowledging your services in the office which you are just about to lay down, and bidding you a respectful and affectionate farewell.

"We have to thank you for the model of an administration conducted on the purest principles of republicanism; for pomp and state laid aside; patronage discarded; internal taxes abolished; a host of superfluous officers disbanded; the monarchic maxim that 'a national debt is a national blessing,' renounced, and more than thirty-three millions of our debt discharged; the native right to near one hundred millions of acres of our national domain extinguished; and without the guilt or calamities of conquest, a vast and fertile region added to our country, far more extensive than her original possessions, bringing along with it the Mississippi and the port of Orleans, the trade of the West to the Pacific Ocean, and in the intrinsic value of the land itself, a source of permanent and almost inexhaustible revenue. These are points in your administration which the historian will not fail to seize, to expand, and to teach posterity to dwell upon with delight. Nor will he forget

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our peace with the civilized world, preserved through a season of uncommon difficulty and trial; the good will cultivated with the unfortunate aborigines of our country, and the civilization humanely extended among them; the lesson taught the inhabitants of the coast of Barbary, that we have the means of chastising their piratical encroachments, and awing them into justice; and that theme, which, above all others, the historic genius will hang upon with rapture, the liberty of speech and the press preserved inviolate, without which genius and science are given to man in vain.

“In the principles on which you have administered the government, we see only the continuation and maturity of the same virtues and abilities which drew upon you in your youth the resentment of Dunmore. From the first brilliant and happy moment of your resistance to foreign tyranny until the present day, we mark with pleasure and with gratitude the same uniform and consistent character — the same warm and devoted attachment to liberty and the Republic, the same Roman love of your country, her rights, her peace, her honour, her prosperity.”

The language of rhetoric is not always the language of truth. But never has a ruler better merited the gratitude of his countrymen; and on this occasion at least democracy, often fickle in its favours and inconstant in its affections, rewarded a faithful champion with every tribute of gratitude, honour, and esteem as he stepped with quiet dignity from the public stage to rejoin his neighbours at Charlottesville.

## BOOK VII

### LAST YEARS AT MONTICELLO

#### CHAPTER I

THE MADISON ADMINISTRATIONS. 1809-1817

. . . Nec vos, dulcissima mundi  
Nomina, vos Musae, libertas, otia, libri,  
Hortique sylvaeque anima remanente relinquam.

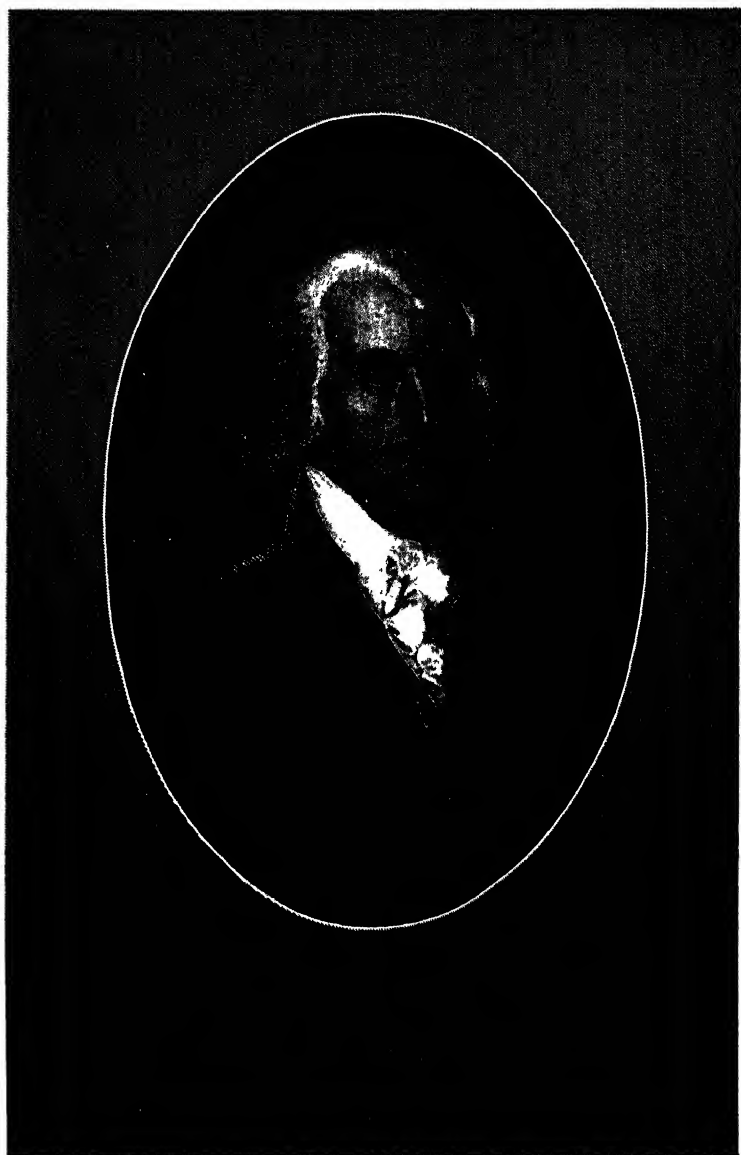
Nor by me e'er shall you,  
You of all names the sweetest, and the best,  
You Muses, books, and liberty, and rest;  
You gardens, fields, and woods forsaken be,  
As long as life itself forsakes not me.

— ABRAHAM COWLEY

A STATESMAN is not always seen at his best when the time comes for him to relinquish high office. But Jefferson handed over the reins of government to James Madison with something more than the composure of a philosopher; for like Wordsworth's Happy Warrior, 'conspicuous object in a nation's eye,' he was

"Yet a soul, whose master bias leans  
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes."

It was in this spirit that he wrote just before leaving Washington to his friend Dupont de Nemours in Paris: "Within a few days I retire to my family, my books, and farms; and having gained the harbour myself I shall look on my friends still buffeting the storm, with anxiety in-



*Painted by Stuart*



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deed, but not with envy. Never did a prisoner released from his chains feel such relief as I feel on shaking off the shackles of power." Nature, he thought, had intended him for the tranquil pursuits of science; these were his supreme delight. But public exigencies and public duty had forced him to navigate the boisterous seas of politics. He was happy now to retire, carrying home 'the most consoling proofs of public approbation.' The ex-President was within a month of his sixty-sixth birthday; but his mind was in full vigour and his body was still equal to great exertion. On his way back from Washington to Monticello with a caravan of furniture and books he encountered bad roads and worse weather. But he took no harm, though one day he rode eight hours on horseback through a terrific snowstorm. Clearly his strength was equal to a third term of office. Only republican scruples and a real preference for Monticello explain his choice.

There was plenty to do. His farms consisted of over five thousand acres with 113 slaves at Monticello, and over four thousand with 85 slaves at Poplar Forest. Seventy miles or more of rough road separated Monticello from the Poplar Estate, which he visited regularly for a few weeks every year. At Monticello wheat was the main crop; at Poplar Forest he also raised tobacco. On the Rivanna he had a flour mill, with a dam, canal, and lock in which he had invested a good deal of capital. He had also a number of workshops for making tools and agricultural implements, and hand-machines for spinning and weaving into cloth the wool of his flocks. During his presidency both estates had been mismanaged by factors, and since the embargo agricultural profits had dwindled for lack of markets. Jefferson had tried to let his land in holdings of moderate size to farmers. Unfortunately he

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could not find suitable tenants, and as time went on debts and difficulties accumulated. His friend and biographer, Tucker, remarks that he was far too easy going with his overseers. Those who were indolent he was apt to excuse, and a knave escaped detection. He was a generous and benevolent master. His slaves were well fed and well clothed. Those who had mechanical aptitudes received special training and encouragement. A skilful craftsman, he lavished money on tools for his workshop, on scientific instruments, on new machinery and inventions, on books, and most of all on buildings — for architecture was his most expensive passion. Much of the labour, says Tucker, which should have been appropriated to husbandry, was requisitioned to provide timber, stone, and brick. Last but not least a truly Virginian munificence taxed the estates to supply provender for the horses of his frequent visitors, and a hospitable table for guests, invited and uninvited, who made their way from all parts of the world and at all seasons of the year to far-famed Monticello.

The patriarch's busy leisure was sweetened by the society of his daughter, Mrs. Randolph and her children, soon to be reinforced by another generation. He loved to play with the children, to superintend their education, and to devise games and amusements.

Apart from financial troubles which accumulated in the last years of his life, his chief complaint was the burden of correspondence; not with old friends — for in that he rejoiced — but with the innumerable persons, pushful or inquisitive, or genuinely anxious for guidance, often perfect strangers, who consulted him as guide, philosopher, and friend. He was the oracle to whom all appealed for advice or assistance. His reading was as various as his

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tastes. Nothing came amiss. A letter from a correspondent would often put him on a new train of thought or research; and he would turn up a Christian Father, an old book of travel, a work on mathematics or science or law or government. Among his pet studies and hobbies were the customs and languages of the American Indians, philology, systems of education, Anglo-Saxon, the origin of the common law, astronomy, meteorology, gardening, botany, and agriculture. The classics seem to have become more and more his favourite recreation. His intention of withdrawing altogether from the contentions of politics was frustrated, partly because the two succeeding Presidents, Madison and Monroe, whose administrations covered the next sixteen years of his life, constantly consulted him at important crises in national affairs; partly because his fame as prophet and inspirer of republicanism remained undiminished and unchallenged; so that his written opinions often had the character of acts, and his personal influence from time to time changed the course of events.

A few days after his return to Monticello he wrote to Madison, pointing out the danger of war and the peculiar embarrassments in which it would involve a government exposed to the attacks of so many mendacious and licentious papers, which played upon the "wonderful credulity of the members of Congress." It was his fervent prayer that war should be avoided, though a time might come when it would be less injurious than unresisted depredation. His anxiety for the new President, whom he supported from first to last with undeviating loyalty and affection, was well founded. In political opinions Madison was Jefferson's brother; in scientific knowledge of politics he was Jefferson's equal. But he had no divine spark of genius,



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nor the personal magnetism which had ensured harmony and unity in Jefferson's Cabinet. Nor was he fitted either to resist a war party or to conduct a war. It would be unfair to say, as some do, that he was timid, irresolute, or lacking in energy. On the contrary, from the very first emergence of parties Madison had displayed resourcefulness and courage in debate and a dogged tenacity of purpose in leading the opposition to Hamilton. But he was not quite the man to steer the only safe and wise course between naval Scylla and military Charybdis. Still less when driven to extremities would he be likely to ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm.

The story of Madison's difficulties as President belongs to Madison's life. They began with sharp controversies in the Cabinet. In 1810 and 1811 foreign difficulties accumulated. There was little to choose between France and England on the score of outrages upon American trade and shipping. But there was a jingo wing of the Republican party which favoured war with England, and an ample supply of grievances was available. These 'War Hawks,' with Henry Clay at their head, seem to have persuaded Madison in 1811 that he must take a strong line, if he wished to secure a second term. We all know the tribe of politicians who talk their country into war and inspire others to die at the front. Clay and his men proclaimed "the national spirit and expectation"; they gave out that the American republic, if it was to recover its dignity and the respect of mankind, must fight somebody. Madison was accused of entering into a compact with Clay. But it seems more probable that, ambitious of a second term, he resolved against his better judgment to swim with the stream, to abandon the wise Fabian policy of cunctation, and to adopt measures which would

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probably lead to war. He got the nomination, was re-elected after a close struggle, and began to use menacing language against Great Britain in the winter of 1811-12. Measures were taken to increase the army and navy; and a batch of papers bought from John Henry, an Irish adventurer, was laid before Congress in March, 1812, to stimulate the war spirit by showing that the Governor of Canada was abetting a separatist movement in the eastern states. As a matter of fact the country was disunited. The Federalists, who had tried to force war upon Jefferson a few years before, were all for peace, now that their ships could sail again on profitable hazards. But Clay and the hot heads clamoured for Honour and Glory. "Weak as we are," cried Clay, "we could fight France too if necessary in a good cause — the cause of honour and independence. . . . War after all is not so terrible a thing. There is no terror in it except its novelty." Clay was a Kentuckian. Significantly enough the most bellicose states were those which would be furthest removed from hostilities.

The Federalists and a minority of Republicans, who had brilliant spokesmen in Josiah Quincy and John Randolph, tried to procrastinate; and they were nearly successful. At the beginning of April, 1812, the President recommended an embargo policy, which was interpreted to mean war. In May he was nominated for re-election by the Congressional caucus. At the beginning of June came his war message, and on June 18 a bill passed by both Houses was signed by the President, who proclaimed war against Great Britain on the following day. The minorities in Congress for peace were large — 49 against 79 in the House, and 13 against 19 in the Senate. Nor did the outbreak of hostilities put an end to the opposition. It

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continued until peace was signed, and assumed in some sections of the New England States an almost seditious character.

Meanwhile the English parliament was inquiring into the policy and consequences of the Orders in Council. Petitioners from the manufacturing districts proved conclusively that the loss of the American markets was responsible for much of the unemployment and starvation wages which then prevailed in the manufacturing districts of the kingdom. It was shown also from public documents issued by the American government that if the British Orders in Council were rescinded the ports and markets of the United States would be reopened to British merchandise. The assassination of Perceval on May 11, 1812, removed the most obstinate opponent of conciliation with America. The new government formed by the Earl of Liverpool, with Castlereagh as foreign secretary, determined to repeal the Orders in Council; and on June 23 a proclamation revoking them appeared in the *London Gazette*, just five days after Madison had declared war against Great Britain. Had there been telegraphic communication between the two countries peace would have been preserved. For several weeks after the declaration of war the British government believed that it had restored peaceful and amicable relations with the United States. But President Madison meanwhile had declared war, because the British government had refused to do what it had already determined to do.

When the news reached America, an Armistice ought to have been arranged; but the Government was committed, and the partisans of war were not to be balked. A large army was being enrolled for the conquest of Canada, which was thought to be an easy prey. But when Congress

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met in the autumn, the invasion had ended in humiliating defeat. Fortunately for Madison the skill of American seamen and gunners had won several brilliant naval victories, and he was re-elected to the Presidency by 128 to 89.

Carl Schurz in his excellent life of Henry Clay declares that Madison was swept into the current of war by the impetuosity of young America led by the fiery, fanciful, and finished oratory of Henry Clay. The Federalists had a good case against continuing the war when its real cause, the Orders in Council, was found to have been removed; and when Quincy denounced the invasion of Canada as a buccaneering expedition it was not easy to find a satisfactory answer, especially after its inglorious and humiliating failure. In January the government was heavily assailed in Congress. Henry Clay rallied the wavering Republicans in a speech long remembered for the purple passage in which he dexterously used Quincy's attack on Jefferson for a eulogy of the retired hero: —

“Neither his retirement from public office, nor his eminent services, nor his advanced age, can exempt this patriot from the coarse assaults of party malevolence. Sir, in 1801 he snatched from the rude hand of usurpation the violated Constitution of his country, and that is his crime. He preserved that instrument in form, and substance, and spirit, a precious inheritance for generations to come; and for this he can never be forgiven. How vain and impotent is party rage directed against such a man! He is not more elevated by his lofty residence upon the summit of his favorite mountain than he is lifted, by the serenity of his mind, and the consciousness of a well spent life, above the malignant passions and bitter feelings of the day.”

Jefferson's fame was indeed a bulwark of Madison's administration, which was making a sad mess of the war. “The War and Navy departments were wretchedly managed. There was incapacity above and below. The Treasury was in a state of exhaustion. By April 1 the requisi-

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tions of the War and Navy departments must have gone unsatisfied, had not Astor, Parish, and Girard, three rich foreigners, come to the assistance of the government.”<sup>1</sup> Jefferson acquiesced sadly in the policy adopted by the government. He never allowed himself to lose confidence in the integrity and good intentions of Madison, whatever he may have thought of his capacity and statesmanship. When war came, he defended it in letters to friends abroad by reciting the intolerable grievances and humiliations which America had endured; but as a rule his language against Napoleon was at least as strong as against Britain, and sometimes stronger. At first he hoped for the conquest of Canada. When those hopes were dashed by the cowardly capitulation of General Hull, he began to long for an honourable settlement, and rejoiced when Alexander of Russia in March, 1813, offered his mediation. Madison by this time was equally eager for peace. Early in May, 1814, he despatched Gallatin and Bayard to St. Petersburg. But the British government preferred direct negotiations. Thereupon the President promptly appointed a new commission, which included Gallatin and Clay. They eventually met the English commissioners at Ghent in August, 1814, and at last signed a *status quo* treaty of peace on December 24, after one of the most futile wars in modern history.

Among Jefferson's correspondents was General Kosciusko, who had fought in the American War of Independence, and had consigned his interests and will as regards his American property to the care of Jefferson. To this famous champion of liberty Jefferson from time to time remitted money accompanied by letters when safe conveyance offered. In one of these (February 26, 1810) he

<sup>1</sup> See Schurz, *Life of Henry Clay*, Chapter V.

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explains that as President his letters were necessarily dry, as he had to avoid politics, but now retired from public concerns he can write more freely. Then he describes his life:—

“I am retired to Monticello, where in the bosom of my family and surrounded by my books I enjoy repose to which I have been long a stranger. My mornings are devoted to correspondence, from breakfast to dinner I am in my shops, in my garden, or on horseback among my farms; from dinner to dark I give to society and recreation with my neighbors and friends; and from candle light to early bedtime I read. My health is perfect; and my strength considerably reinforced by the activity of the course I pursue; perhaps it is as great as usually falls to the lot of near sixty-seven years of age. I talk of ploughs and harrows, of seeding and harvesting, with my neighbors; and of politics too, if they choose, with as little reserve as the rest of my fellow citizens, and feel at length the blessing of being free to do and say what I please, without being responsible for it to any mortal.”

He found pleasure in directing the studies of a number of young men living in the neighbourhood, who had the use of his library and counsel and made a part of his society. “In advising the course of their reading I endeavour to keep their attention fixed on the main objects of all science, the freedom and happiness of man,” so that when they came to bear a share in the government of their country they would keep ever in view the sole objects of all legitimate government.

In the following year (1811) the most interesting event of his life is the renewal of his old friendship with John Adams, which was never afterwards broken and has left us one of the most precious morsels of correspondence in American literature. It was brought about by the efforts of their mutual friend, Dr. Benjamin Rush. When he approached Jefferson, Jefferson at once answered explaining the details of their alienation after the presidential

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election of 1800 and "those scenes of midnight appointment which have been condemned by all men." He had however never lost his good opinion of Adams, but thought it was a part of his honest character "to suspect foul play in those of whom he is jealous and not easily to relinquish his suspicion." During the summer two neighbouring friends of Jefferson's made a tour northwards and at Boston fell into the company of Adams, who invited them to pass a day with him at Braintree. There he spoke without reserve about his Cabinet and about the newspapers, and in the course of the conversation said: "I always loved Jefferson and still love him." The two friends brought back their report to Monticello, and on December 5, Jefferson wrote to Rush: "This is enough for me. I only needed this knowledge to revive towards him all the affections of the most cordial moments of our lives. Changing a single word only in Dr. Franklin's character of him, I knew him to be always an honest man, often a great one, but sometimes incorrect and precipitate in his judgments." They had differed in political opinions, "but his opinions are as honestly formed as my own," and why should differences in politics, religion, philosophy, or anything else be a cause of separation? A few weeks later a letter came from Adams with a present of homespun, which evoked an affectionate reply from Monticello: "A letter from you calls up recollections very dear to my mind. It carries me back to the times when, beset with difficulties and dangers, we were fellow labourers in the same cause, struggling for what is most valuable to man, his right of self government."

The correspondence which followed continued to the end of their lives — and even in death they were not divided. It is replete with out-of-the-way learning. The

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whimsical talents of the sage of Quincy appear at their best and draw in turn rich stores from Monticello. In the spring of 1812 they began to discuss the Richmond and Wabash 'prophets' and other crazy folk who pretended to be in communication with an unseen world. Then they went on to the traditions and origins of the Red Indians, whom some believed to be descended from the Jews. From this they passed to the American parties, and the debatable ground of politics and religion, which caused an animated exchange of letters in the summer or autumn of 1813. Adams' spirited defence against the imputation of monarchical and aristocratic leanings, and his complacent self-satisfaction in recalling his own correct predictions of the course of the French Revolution at a time when Jefferson and his friends were so confident and optimistic, afford us much entertainment. So does this contrast between the political consequences of his own wisdom and Jefferson's unwisdom: "My defence of the Constitution and Discourses on Davila laid the foundation for that immense unpopularity which fell like a tower of Siloam upon me. Your steady defence of democratical principles, and your invariable favourable opinion of the French Revolution laid the foundation of your unbounded popularity." In another letter he quotes (a little mischievously perhaps) from Priestley's correspondence with Lindsay, where Priestley said of Jefferson: "He is generally considered an unbeliever; if so however he cannot be far from us, and I hope in the way to be almost if not altogether what we are. He now attends public worship very regularly, and his moral conduct was never impeached." Upon this Adams remarks cheerfully: "Now I see not but you are as good a Christian as Priestley and Lindsay. Piety and morality were the end and object of the Christian according to



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them and according to you. They believed in the resurrection of Jesus, in his miracles, and in his inspiration; but what inspiration?"

Then followed a perfect cataract of provocative questions, but Jefferson was not easily drawn into contention. He returned no pinpricks; and when an unscrupulous author published two or three old private letters, in which he had roundly rated Adams for his reactionary policy as President, Jefferson smoothed the ruffled feelings of his old friend, and deftly attributed the political errors of the Adams administration to the rascality of those Hamiltonian colleagues against whom John Adams was perpetually thundering.

How much of his time Jefferson gave to current politics is not clear. Madison and Monroe, who to Jefferson's great satisfaction, joined the Cabinet as Secretary in 1811, frequently visited him at Monticello. He was indeed responsible for the reconciliation between the two rivals, and so smoothed the way for Monroe's presidency. Until the war Madison kept Jefferson very fully informed of all that was going on, and Jefferson exerted all his influence to prevent or heal the personal or political dissensions which had begun to endanger the unity and discipline of the republican party. Among his friends Duane, editor of the *Aurora* in Virginia, caused some commotion by sharply attacking Gallatin, and by criticisms of the President. Getting into financial difficulties Duane came to Jefferson for help; and thereupon Jefferson read him a faithful lecture on the duty of supporting his party and its chief in critical times. "The Republicans, he reminded Duane, are the nation. The Federalists are but a faction, powerful indeed in the command of money and supported by England. On the republican party therefore the last hope of human

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liberty in this world rested. They should therefore close their ranks, leave the President free to choose his own colleagues and pursue his own measures. Principles alone could justify schism. If we find our government rushing headlong towards monarchy, violating trial by jury, freedom of the press, or freedom of opinion, or raising standing armies for the suppression of personal liberty "then indeed let us withdraw and call the nation to its tents. But while our functionaries are wise and honest and vigilant, let us move compactly under their guidance . . . Things may here and there go a little wrong. It is not in their power to prevent it."

In another letter to Duane he discussed the duties of a republican editor: "I think an editor should be independent, that is of personal influence, and not be moved from his opinions on the mere authority of any individual. But with respect to the general opinion of the political section with which he habitually accords, his duty seems very like that of a member of Congress." Some Congressmen and journalists, he went on, seem to think that independence requires them to follow always their own opinion without respect for that of others. That had never been his own view or practice. When he differed from those of the same political principles with whom he generally thought and acted he began to suspect that his own opinion might be wrong. To be free from self distrust and to be devoid of the spirit of compromise was but a false kind of independence. The example of John Randolph should be a caution to all honest and prudent men to sacrifice a little of self confidence and to go with their friends, although they might sometimes think they were going wrong. This would be his own course. He would go with the government, and support their measures "whether I

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think them right or wrong; because I know they are honest, and are wiser and better informed than I am." So wrote Jefferson in the spring of 1811.<sup>1</sup> At the same time he was vigorously defending Gallatin to his friend William Wirt, a rising lawyer and politician in Virginia, and deploring the efforts of Duane and others "to drive from the administration the ablest man except the President, who ever was in it, and to beat down the President himself because he is unwilling to part with so able a counsellor." The letter to Wirt is interesting because it shows clearly that Jefferson was supporting Madison against the war party. Duane, he says, is an honest man and sincerely republican, but his readers should be on their guard against his occasional aberrations:—

"He is eager for war against England; hence his abuse of the two last Congresses, but the people wish for peace. The re-elections of the same men prove it. And indeed war against Bedlam would be just as rational as against Europe in its present condition of demoralisation. When peace becomes more losing than war, we may prefer the latter on principles of pecuniary consideration. But for us to attempt by wars to reform all Europe and bring them back to principles of morality and a respect for the equal rights of nations would show us to be only maniacs. We should indeed have the merits of the good intentions as well as of the folly of the hero of La Mancha."

A few days after this letter he was able to congratulate his friend Monroe on entering into the national councils. The printers, he said in the letter, are "thirsting after war, some against France, some against England, but the people wish for peace with both."

Towards the autumn of 1811, when prospects of war

<sup>1</sup> A few weeks later he recommends to Duane Komarzewski's *History of Poland*. "Though without any charms of style or composition it gives a lesson which all our countrymen should study; the example of a country erased from the map of the world by the dissensions of its own citizens."

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with England became menacing, Jefferson foresaw the possibility of a separate treaty between Old and New England on the principles of neutrality and commerce; but he hopes that the expected death of George III will come to their relief, and if only some stroke of fortune could rid them at the same time of Napoleon "the people of England might lose their fears, and recover their sober senses again." Shortly afterwards in a letter to an English botanist he deplors the contest that British usurpations may force upon nations a thousand leagues apart "who have not a single motive or interest but of mutual friendship and of interchange of comforts. That such a thing should be possible shows the monstrous character of the system under which we live."

To his son-in-law John W. Eppes in September he wrote expressing his continued hopes of peace, through a change of ministers in England which might result in a revocation of the Orders in Council. "I am so far in that case from believing that our reputation will be tarnished by our not having mixed in the mad contests of the rest of the world that, setting aside the ravings of pepper-pot politicians, — of whom there are enough in every age and country — I believe it will place us high in the scale of wisdom to have preserved our country tranquil and prosperous during a contest which prostrated the honour, power, independence, laws, and property of every country on the other side of the Atlantic."

A solar eclipse on the 17th of September was watched and timed by Jefferson and a friend with telescopes and clock, from Monticello. There are several letters of his on the subject. "I used myself an equatorial telescope," he says. A friend who happened to be with him observed the eclipse through an achromatic telescope of Bolland's.

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"Two others attended the time-pieces. I had a perfect observation of the passage of the sun over the meridian." Owing to an error caused by the clock some of the observations were imperfect, and Jefferson became interested in the preparation of a clock on which he could rely. He applied to Mr. Voigt of Philadelphia for a timepiece with a special kind of pendulum and with an alternative pendulum devised by Jefferson which could be substituted for Voigt's. In giving his instructions Jefferson writes:—

"The bob should be spherical, of lead, and its radius I presume about one inch. As I should not have the convenience of a room of uniform temperature, the suspending rod should be such as not to be affected by heat or cold, nor yet so heavy as to affect too sensibly the centre of oscillation. Would not a rod of wood not larger than a large wire answer this double view? I remember Mr. Rittenhouse told me he had made experiments on some occasion on the expansibility of wood lengthwise by heat, which satisfied him that it was as good as the gridiron for a suspensor of the bob. By the experiments on the strength of wood and iron in supported weights appended to them, iron has been found but about six times as strong as wood, while its specific gravity is eight times as great. Consequently a rod of it of equal strength will weigh but three fourth of one of iron, and disturb the centre of oscillation less in proportion. A rod of wood of white oak, *e.g.* not larger than a seine twine would probably support a spherical bob of lead of one inch radius. It might be worked down to that size I suppose by the Cabinet makers, who are in the practice of preparing smaller threads of wood for inlaying. The difficulty would be in making it fast to the bob at one end and scapement at the other, so as to regulate the length with ease and accuracy."

He relies upon Mr. Voigt's ingenuity to carry out these instructions, which are inserted here as evidence that, just as in politics Jefferson united theory with practice, so in mechanics he united the skill of the craftsman with the knowledge of the scientist.

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At this very time as President of the Philosophical Society he sent to a committee which was engaged on considering a fixed international standard for measures, weights, and coins a very learned disquisition to show that a standard "whether it be matter or motion should be fixed by nature invariable and accessible to all nations, independently of others, and with a convenience not disproportioned to its utility." This he found in the pendulum, and the ratio for the parts and multiples of the unit would be "the decimal without a doubt." He suggested that they should enter into correspondence in a spirit of equality with their sister institutions in England, France, and other countries for the purpose of interchanging information and arriving at common measures of weight and measurement.

Of all the important sciences Jefferson thought medicine the most backward, and agreed with a correspondent that the best foundation for improvement would be a natural history of the diseases of the human body. "While surgery," he wrote, "is seated in the temple of the exact sciences, medicine has scarcely entered its threshold. Her theories have passed in such rapid succession as to prove the insufficiency of all, and their fatal errors are recorded in the necrology of man." For veterinary doctors Jefferson had an even greater contempt than for those who professed to understand the human body, and few men knew more than he did about horses or cared more for them.

Before the outbreak of the war with England and throughout its duration Jefferson occupied himself much with the political economy of war in all its aspects. A scientific believer in Free Trade and sound money, fervent in his hatred of debt and inconvertible paper currency, he was forced to consider how far war, which upsets everything, could best be sustained. British naval policy had

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driven him to the view that the United States must manufacture all essentials for itself in order to ensure economic and political independence, and so after war was declared he wrote to Kosciusko June 28, 1812:—

“Our manufactures are now very nearly on a footing with those of England. She has not a single improvement which we do not possess, and many of them better adapted by ourselves to our ordinary use. We have reduced the large and expensive machinery for most things to the compass of a private family, and every family of any size is now getting machines on a small scale for their household purposes. Quoting myself as an example, and I am much behind many others in this business, my household manufactures are just getting into operation on the scale of a carding machine costing \$60 only, which may be worked by a girl of twelve years old, a spinning machine, which may be had for \$10, carrying 6 spindles for wool, to be worked by a girl also, another which can be made for \$25, carrying 12 spindles for cotton, and a loom, with a flying shuttle, weaving its twenty yards a day. I need 2,000 yards of linen, cotton, and woollen yearly, to clothe my family, which this machinery, costing \$150 only, and worked by two women and two girls, will more than furnish. For fine goods there are numerous establishments at work in the large cities, and many more daily growing up; and of merinos we have some thousands, and these multiplying fast. We consider a sheep for every person as sufficient for their woollen clothing, and this State and all to the north have fully that, and those to the south and west will soon be up to it. In other articles we are equally advanced, so that nothing is more certain than that, come peace when it will, we shall never again go to England for a shilling where we have gone for a dollar's worth. Instead of applying to her manufacturers there, they must starve or come here to be employed. I give you these details of peaceable operations, because they are within my present sphere. Those of war are in better hands, who know how to keep their own secrets.”

On receiving at the end of June from Madison his declaration of war Jefferson tells his friend that to keep the war popular two things are necessary, the first to stop Indian barbarities; this would be achieved by the conquest of

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Canada. Secondly, to furnish markets for American produce. They were cutting the largest wheat crop on record.

"It would be mortifying to the farmer to see such an one rotting in his barn. It would soon sicken him of war. Nor can this be a matter of wonder or of blame on him. Ours is the only country on earth where war is an instantaneous and total suspension of all the objects of his industry and support. For carrying our produce to foreign markets our own ships, neutral ships, and even enemy ships under neutral flag, which I would wink at, would probably suffice. But the coasting trade is of double importance because both seller and buyer are disappointed, and both are our own citizens."

In July Jefferson had his learned tract on the Battle of New Orleans, printed by a New York publisher. At this time he fancied the acquisition of Canada as far as Quebec would be "a mere matter of marching," and that the following year would see the capture of Quebec and Halifax, and the final expulsion of England from the American continent.

On August 8, when news came of the repeal of the Orders in Council, Jefferson admitted that if it had come earlier it might have prevented war; but now they should have Canada to indemnify them for the thousand ships taken and the six thousand seamen impressed, with an agreement to protect American seamen in the future. This done they could have peace with England, and then war with France. But his confident expectations were shattered by General Hull's surrender in September, and he then began to see that the conquest of Canada would not be easy. Depressed by these thoughts he found diversion in mathematics, the passion of his life when he was young. "The same passion has returned upon me but with unequal powers. Processes which I then read off with the facility



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of common discourse now cost me labour and time and slow investigation."

About this time a poor Frenchman called at Monticello to inform Jefferson that he had invented perpetual motion. Franklin, he said, had assured him that it was not impossible. Without entering into a contest on his abuse of Franklin's name Jefferson gave him this answer: "The Almighty himself could not construct a machine of perpetual motion, while the laws exist which He has prescribed for the government of matter in our system; seeing that the equilibrium established by Him between cause and effect must be suspended to effect that purpose."

Though pressed by Madison and others to join the Government Jefferson declined, feeling that the conduct of a war required the vigour and enterprise of younger heads. He urged his republican friends to rally to the support of the administration, though he did not agree with all its measures. In January, 1813, he repeats his opinion that "we ought to permit the exportation of grain to our enemies," since it was impossible to starve Great Britain by withholding supplies; "and if she is to be fed at all events, why may we not have the benefit of it as well as others? . . . And as to feeding her armies in the Peninsula, she is fighting our battles there, as Bonaparte is on the Baltic. . . . Besides, if we could by starving the English armies oblige them to withdraw from the Peninsula it would be to send them here; and I think we had better feed them there for pay than feed and fight them here for nothing. A truth too not to be lost sight of is that no country can pay war taxes if you suppress all their resources." Here was another moral and economic *reductio ad absurdum* of war; and Jefferson might have added that many of Napoleon's soldiers were clothed by British manufacturers.

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During the spring and summer of 1813 Jefferson was paying particular attention to the political economy and finance of war. On the theoretical side he was attracted by a manuscript work on political economy sent him from France by Destutt Tracy. He wrote to Duane to arrange for its translation and publication in the United States. It was, he admitted, a little too abstract for some readers. Tracy was the writer referred to by Bonaparte in addressing his Council of State, when he described popular notions of government as "the dark and metaphysical doctrine of ideology." But Jefferson was an ideologist, believing that correct theory, alike in politics and economics, is necessary to sound practice.

It was in the domain of paper money and public debt that Jefferson's constructive criticisms were most useful. Here we may not only admire his fertility and vigour but claim originality for his contributions to the science of finance. No statesman of his time, not even Sir Henry Parnell, had a better understanding of the paper money abomination, or of the regulations necessary to restrain banks and treasuries in the issue of notes to serve as currency. Nor will it be doubted after the experience of another century that Jefferson was on the side of the angels in the policy he developed for the redemption of public debt in time of peace, and in the proposals which he made for financing the war with England. His son-in-law, John W. Eppes, was a member of Congress and Chairman of the Finance Committee. To him therefore Jefferson addressed himself in June, 1813, when Madison's administration was itself in financial straits. "It is a wise rule," he wrote, "and should be fundamental in a government disposed to cherish its credit, and at the same time to restrain the use of it within the limits of its faculties, never

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to borrow a dollar without laying a tax in the same instant for paying the interest annually and the principal within a given term; and to consider that tax as pledged to the creditors on the public faith. On such a pledge as this, sacredly observed, a government may always command on a reasonable interest all the lendable money of their citizens, while the necessity of an equivalent tax is a salutary warning to them and their constituents against oppressions, bankruptcy, and its inevitable consequence, revolution."

The term of redemption, he added, should be within the limit of the government's rightful powers, these limits being prescribed by the laws of nature, which forbid society to create a perpetual debt. For "the earth belongs to the living and not to the dead." Each generation may be considered as a corporation which enjoys during its continuation the usufruct of the earth. When one generation passes away, the usufruct should pass to the other free and unincumbered. "We may consider each generation as a distinct nation, with a right by the will of its majority to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding generations more than the inhabitants of another country." For this he found a legal illustration, likening it to the ordinary case of a tenant for life, who may hypothecate the land for his debts during the continuance of his usufruct; but at his death the reversioner receives it exonerated from all burthen. Jefferson determined the length of a generation by the laws of mortality. <sup>1</sup> Taking Buffon's tables he found that of the adult citizens living at a given moment one-half will be dead in eighteen years and eight months. "At nineteen years then from the date of a contract the majority of the contractors are dead and their contract with them." By

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way of illustration he takes the State of New York, and supposes that a majority of its inhabitants on January 1, 1794, borrowed a sum of money equal to the fee simple value of the state and consumed it in eating, drinking, and making merry; "or, if you please, in quarrelling and fighting with their unoffending neighbours." Nineteen years later a new majority have arrived on the scene with new rights. Are they bound to acknowledge the debt, and to allow that the preceding generation had a right to eat up the whole soil of their country and alienate it to creditors? And ought they to consider themselves legally or morally bound to give up their country and emigrate to another? Jefferson replies: "Everyone will say No; that the soil is the gift of God to the living, as much as it has been to the deceased generation, and the laws of nature impose no obligation on them to pay this debt." Although, like some other natural rights, this law had not yet been promulgated, yet it ought to be acted upon by honest governments. It would serve at the same time as a salutary curb on the spirit of war, which since the modern theory of the perpetuation of debt "has drenched the earth with blood and crushed its inhabitants under burdens ever accumulating." It was much in this spirit that Disraeli once denounced "Dutch finance," and that Gladstone described taxation as an instrument imposed by the Almighty to curb the warlike passions of nations and to induce them to exchange war for peace. Had this principle been declared in the British Bill of Rights, wrote Jefferson, "England would have been placed under the happy disability of waging eternal war and of contracting her thousand millions of public debt."

Applying these thoughts to the present emergency he points out that Madison's government has not yet begun

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to act on the rule of loans and taxes going hand in hand. A loan had been issued without any redeeming tax. Congress should now set the example by appropriating a tax to the service of the loan sufficient to pay the interest annually and to pay off the principal within nineteen years. "I hope yourself and your Committee will render the immortal service of introducing this practice. . . . I am sorry to see our loans begin at so exorbitant an interest.<sup>1</sup> And yet even at that you will soon be at the bottom of the loan bag." He reminds Eppes that the nation was an agricultural one which employed its savings in buying and improving land. Its lendable money was mostly in the hands of trustees. In such a nation there was only one resource for loans sufficient to carry it through the expense of a war. This resource or fund was the mass of circulating coin. Unfortunately this resource had been fooled away by the States "to swindlers and shavers under the cover of private banks." In the war of 1755 the State of Virginia had availed itself of this fund by issuing a paper money "bottomed on a specific tax for its redemption, and to insure its credit bearing an interest of five per cent." The device was successful, and the State paper thus safeguarded never depreciated a single farthing. Jefferson contrasts this with the ruinous paper money finance adopted by the old Congress and the States during the Revolutionary war.

He proposes as a remedy that the States should be asked to transfer the right of issuing circulating paper to Congress, in order that this sole resource for loans in an agricultural country might be recovered for the use of the nation. This fund he thought "would always be sufficient to carry us through any war; provided that in the interval

<sup>1</sup> Six per cent.

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between war and war all the outstanding paper should be called in, coin be permitted to flow in again, and to hold the field of circulation until another war should require its yielding place again to the national medium."

How clearly Jefferson envisaged the situation, and how thoroughly he had mastered the subject, appears from his conclusion, which might well have been written by a currency expert surveying Europe after the war of 1914-18: "Private fortunes in the present state of our circulation are at the mercy of those self created money lenders, and are prostrated by the floods of nominal money with which their avarice deluges us. He who lent his money to the public or to an individual before the institution of the United States Bank twenty years ago, when wheat was well sold at a dollar the bushel, and receives now his nominal sum when it sells at two dollars, is cheated of half his fortune; and by whom? By the banks, which since that have thrown into circulation ten dollars of their nominal money where was one at that time."

In a later letter to Eppes after entering into remedies, and surveying the authorities, he deals with the pretended scarcity of money and the consequences of emitting further large issues. After explaining the quantitative theory of money — which means in brief, that if you double the amount of money in a country you halve its value — he points out the enormous advantages of specie over paper as a medium of exchange: "being of universal value it will keep itself at a general level flowing out from where it is still high to parts where it is lower." Paper money is of local value only. If there is too little of it, gold and silver may flow in to supply the deficiency; but if there is too much it accumulates, banishes gold and silver from circulation and depreciates itself. Adam Smith had ad-

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mitted that the commerce of a country, when suspended by the 'Daedalian wings' of paper money, cannot be so secure as on the solid ground of gold and silver. Estimating the annual produce of the United States at 300 millions of dollars, Jefferson takes thirty-five millions as the amount required for currency, which would be midway between Adam Smith's minimum of one-thirtieth and his maximum of one-fifth. But he thinks that the proper amount might be much less; for in June, 1775, the old Congress (after a long and able discussion) estimated that their two millions of people would require two millions of dollars, and accordingly issued that amount of paper currency. On this estimate eight millions of people would now require eight millions of dollars. But Jefferson calculated that, while their proper circulation would be anywhere from 8 to 35 millions of dollars, the actual circulation at that moment was 200 millions — to which it had been proposed to add ninety more to relieve the great scarcity of money! During a similar inflation in Scotland, after a period of overtrading, Adam Smith had explained how speculators, who had over borrowed, complained of the 'contracted views' and 'dastardly spirit' of the bank directors whose prudent and necessary caution seemed to be causing distress in the country. "The banks, they seem to have thought, could extend their credit to whatever sum might be wanted without incurring any other expense besides that of a few reams of paper." Nor did Jefferson fail to notice John Law's opinion that the industry of Scotland languished for want of money to employ it; and he mentioned Law's plan of remedying this want of money by issuing paper to the amount of the whole value of the land of Scotland — a project which afterwards took shape in the Mississippi scheme, and

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wrecked not only the public treasury of France but thousands of private fortunes. When Hamilton funded the public debt they had heard much about a public debt being a public blessing; as if the stock created represented active capital for the aliment of commerce and industry. "This paradox was well adapted to the minds of believers in dreams, and the gulls of that time entered *bona fide* into it. But the art and mystery of banks is a wonderful improvement on that. It is established on the principle that private debts are a public blessing."

After some further analysis Jefferson felt himself warranted in affirming that the new theory of *private* debts being a blessing was as ridiculous as the old one. The truth is, as he pointed out, "that capital may be produced by industry and accumulated by economy; but jugglers only will propose to create it by legerdemain tricks with paper." It was also contended by the inflationists that the paper currency then circulating in America was "as good as silver," because people might have silver for it at the banks where it was issued. Jefferson shows that this was not so. In the first place the reservoirs of specie in the vaults of the banks were much too small to redeem the paper, which had already depreciated to about half its pre-war value. In the second place the banks were far away from most of those who used the bank paper. "A farmer having a note of a Boston or Charleston bank, distant hundreds of miles, has no means of calling for the cash." As for the townsmen they dared not inconvenience or offend the banks by asking for cash, because they were mostly on the books of the banks and were there on "sufferance only and during good behaviour." What would be the effect of adding ninety millions more to the circulation? If they proceeded on this mad career, their



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money must infallibly end where the Revolutionary paper money ended. Altogether the old Congress had only printed two hundred million paper dollars when their bills ceased to circulate. "We are now at that sum, but with treble the population and of course a longer tether. Our depreciation is as yet but about two for one. Owing to the support its credit receives from the small reservoirs of specie in the vaults of the banks, it is impossible to say at what point their notes will stop. Nothing is necessary to effect it but a general alarm; and that may take place whenever the public shall begin to reflect on and perceive the impossibility that the banks should repay this sum." He supposes that a panic may arise when the circulation reaches three hundred millions. There would then be a run on the banks. Their notes would be refused. Cash would be demanded. The banks would declare insolvency and close their doors. In the scramble of creditors the countrymen would get nothing, the townsmen but little. Thus a sum would be swindled from the citizens seven times the amount of the real debt, and four times the amount of the fictitious debt of the United States at the close of the war.

To sum up: their aim should be to restore a metallic currency which will preserve its own level, and "can never die in our hands" because it has an intrinsic and universal value. Specie money is also the surest resource in time of war. "The trifling economy of paper as a cheaper medium, or its convenience for transmission, weighs nothing in opposition to the advantages of the precious metals." An inconvertible paper currency, he adds, is not only liable to be abused, but always has been and always will be abused in every country where it is permitted. France was a terrible warning, and the United States was already

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in danger. "No man knows what his property is now worth. . . . It is a palpable falsehood to say we can have specie for our paper whenever demanded. Instead then of yielding to the cries of scarcity of medium set up by speculators, projectors, and commercial gamblers, no endeavours should be spared to begin the work of reducing it by such gradual means as may give time to private fortunes to preserve their poise and settle down with the subsiding medium."

It would be difficult to overpraise the penetration and sagacity of Jefferson's letters to Eppes. His admonitions were not wholly in vain. In the summer of 1814 specie payments had to be suspended; the notes of the State Banks fell to a heavy discount; and the Treasury was at its wits' end. However, the right course was taken at last. Additions were made to the internal revenue taxes, and it was found possible to float another large loan of twenty-five million dollars. After the war was over new taxes were devised, and another loan, this time at seven per cent, was issued. In 1816 the second Bank of the United States was founded to reorganize the currency. It was unfortunate that Madison and his second Secretary of the Treasury, Dallas, who had succeeded Gallatin, were not so well instructed as Jefferson in the science of money. But on the subject of the debt at any rate Madison and Monroe followed his principles, and the debt contracted in the War with England was paid off within a Jeffersonian generation. By the year 1835 the whole public debt of the United States had been extinguished.

As the war dragged on Jefferson was more and more worried by its miserable results and by gloomy anticipations of a financial catastrophe. Ardently as he longed for peace he was restrained by loyalty to the Republican gov-

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ernment and by fear that failure to win the war, or anything like a stalemate settlement, might put the Federalists in power and enable them to give an oligarchic or even a monarchical turn to the Constitution. His letters reflect varying moods of optimism and despondency. A military success revives his hopes of capturing Canada. A defeat elicits well-founded complaints of mismanagement, incompetent officers, and undisciplined militia, though he never blamed the President. Towards the end of the war, when the banks became insolvent, the Administration and Congress at last began to attend to his wise counsels. But enormous losses had been suffered, and Jefferson felt that his own estates had been irretrievably damaged. He had justified the war on the ground of British impressments. But at last he was too thankful to have peace to complain that the question, for which war had been continued, remained unsettled, or that the American commissioners, including the fiery but ineffective Clay, accepted the status quo. He found however some consolation in the thought that American privateers had taken more British ships during the war than were captured by the British during the whole period of the Orders in Council. The lesson at least might be salutary, and the rapid growth of American manufactures might teach Englishmen the unwisdom of antagonizing their best customers.

His letters to Madison and Monroe, who both sought his advice at various stages of the contest, are admirable in temper. There is no fault-finding, even after the humiliating failure to defend Washington. As the war drags on, he insists over and over again that it can only be won by a drastic reorganization of the militia and by a restoration of the public finances. He shows how this may be done, and how the war could be supported for years with-

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out depreciating the currency. Though financial troubles press hard upon him, he meets them with philosophic fortitude, and his letters reflect the marvellous versatility and activity of his powers.

Among his interests old and new Spain had always held a prominent place. He felt sure that Spanish America would be able to assert its independence; but, as history furnished no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government, he feared that the new Spanish republics would end in civil despotisms. To a Spanish Don, who sent him some pamphlets towards the end of 1813, he expressed the opinion that Spain's divorce from her dependencies was not only unavoidable, but would prove a great blessing. An independent friendship secured by ties of consanguinity, language, religion, manners, and habits would certainly lead to a profitable commerce, if instead of pursuing the policy so unwisely practised by Great Britain towards her revolted colonies, Spain would extend to hers affection, aid, and patronage. By those means she would weave a bond of indissoluble union. In the spring of 1814 came a copy of the new Spanish constitution, which he read with considerable satisfaction until he came to the words: "The Roman Catholic religion, the only true one, is and always shall be that of the Spanish nation. The government protects it by wise and just laws, and prohibits the exercise of any other whatever." About the same time (April 19, 1814) an acquaintance in Philadelphia got into trouble for a French work on the creation of the world which was thought disrespectful to the book of Genesis. Jefferson, who had received a copy, and had noticed that the Newtonian philosophy seemed the chief object of attack, thought that Newton "and still less the holy author of our religion"

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needed the protection of the American authorities, and wondered if some American clergyman and ministers would not have liked to adopt as an amendment to their own constitution the Spanish article, striking out the term Roman Catholic and inserting that of their own sect. In spite of the general progress of enlightenment our sage might have discovered, had he lived another hundred years, with no little amazement, that even in the United States there are still Partingtons of both sexes who would brush back the tide of evolutionary science from the tender minds of students in schools and universities.<sup>1</sup>

Students of our legal history, now enriched by the learned and acute researches of Maitland and Pound, should not forget that Jefferson was an early labourer in their fields. In 1814 we find him corresponding with Dr. Thomas Cooper and others on the origins of English law. He urged his friend, a learned lawyer and a stalwart republican, who had suffered imprisonment under the Sedition laws, to prepare a translation of Bracton, whose *De Legibus Angliae* written a few years after the Magna Charta "gives us the state of the Common Law in its ultimate form and exactly at the point of division between the common and statute law." Bracton and King Alfred's

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Partington was immortalised by Sydney Smith in 1831 when the British Die Hard Tories were trying to stop the irresistible progress of the reform movement. In the winter of 1824, he said, in the little seaside town of Sidmouth the tide rose to an incredible height, and the waves rushed in upon the houses. "During this sublime storm Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, squeezing out the sea water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up. But I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent for a slop or a puddle, but should never have meddled with a tempest."

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Code, it will be remembered, had been a favourite study of Jefferson's when he was in George Wythe's chambers at Williamsburg. But Bracton's Latin was so antiquated, obsolete, and unintelligible that only a learned lawyer could understand it without a good English translation and commentary. In one of these letters to Cooper (January 16, 1814) he speaks of the "long and lingering decline of William and Mary." Should his scheme of a new university of Virginia be adopted by the legislature he hopes it may offer a professorship worthy of Cooper's acceptance; and "it might produce too a bidder for the apparatus and library of Dr. Priestley, to which they might add mine on their own terms."

Jefferson also sought to interest Cooper and John Adams, who dearly loved a controversy, in his favourite argument against the doctrine of Hale, Blackstone, and Mansfield that Christianity was part and parcel of the laws of England. For the edification of Adams he quoted with evident relish the Blue Laws of Connecticut, which laid it down "that the laws of God should be the laws of their land, except where their own contradicted them," adding that this was a proposition which "I dare say, our cunning Chief Justice [John Marshall] would swear to, and find as many sophisms to twist it out of the general terms of our declaration of rights, and even the stricter text of the Virginia act for the freedom of religion, as he did to twist Burr's neck out of the halter of treason."<sup>1</sup> At the end of 1813 Dr. Walter Jones, who was writing about American parties, asked Jefferson what he thought about the part played by George Washington. To a good republican there was something painful and perplexing in Washington's 'coalition' with the Federalists.

<sup>1</sup> January 24, 1814.

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Jefferson did not agree that the topic was a 'perilous' one, or that they should allow the Federalists to make a party figure out of a national hero. 'I think,' he wrote, on January 2, 1814, 'I knew General Washington intimately and thoroughly; and were I called on to delineate his character, it should be in terms like these.'

In the character which follows Jefferson's insight and sympathy are revealed with all the delicacy and skill of a great literary artist. As a rule his prose is not quite of the first rank. But in this study he executed a literary masterpiece worthy to be compared with the best work of Clarendon and far excelling all other contemporary portraits of Washington. We are all familiar with the panegyric, which leaves us wondering whether its subject possessed any human frailties. Jefferson's judgment is magnanimous; but his admiration is discriminating; there are lights and shades; the analysis is true to life; it is criticism — not merely an *éloge*; the reader feels that this is the real Washington, whom Jefferson knew and understood. The whole is too long for quotation; but an extract will serve our purpose: —

"His mind was great and powerful, without being of the very first order; his penetration strong, though not so acute as that of a Newton, Bacon, or Locke; and as far as he saw, no judgment was ever sounder. It was slow in operation, being little aided by invention or imagination, but sure in conclusion. . . . He was incapable of fear, meeting personal dangers with the calmest unconcern. Perhaps the strongest feature in his character was prudence, never acting until every circumstance, every consideration, was maturely weighed; refraining if he saw a doubt, but, when once decided, going through with his purpose, whatever obstacles opposed. His integrity was most pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known; no motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or hatred, being able to bias his decision. He was, indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good,

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and a great man. His temper was naturally irritable and high toned; but reflection and resolution had obtained a firm and habitual ascendancy over it. If ever, however, it broke its bonds, he was most tremendous in his wrath. In his expenses he was honourable, but exact; liberal in contributions to whatever promised utility; but frowning and unyielding on all visionary projects, and all unworthy calls on his charity. His heart was not warm in its affections; but he exactly calculated every man's value, and gave him a solid esteem proportioned to it. His person, you know, was fine, his stature exactly what one would wish, his deportment easy, erect, and noble; the best horseman of his age, and the most graceful figure that could be seen on horseback. Although in the circle of his friends, where he might be unreserved with safety, he took a free share in conversation, his colloquial talents were not above mediocrity, possessing neither copiousness of ideas, nor fluency of words. In public, when called on for a sudden opinion, he was unready, short, and embarrassed. Yet he wrote readily, rather diffusely, in an easy and correct style. This he had acquired by conversation with the world, for his education was merely reading, writing, and common arithmetic, to which he added surveying at a later day. His time was employed in action chiefly, reading little, and that only in agriculture and English history. . . . On the whole, his character was, in its mass, perfect, in nothing bad, in few points indifferent; and it may truly be said, that never did nature and fortune combine more perfectly to make a man great, and to place him in the same constellation with whatever worthies have merited from man an everlasting remembrance. For his was the singular destiny and merit, of leading the armies of his country successfully through an arduous war, for the establishment of its independence; of conducting its councils through the birth of a government, new in its forms and principles, until it had settled down into a quiet and orderly train; and of scrupulously obeying the laws through the whole of his career, civil and military, of which the history of the world furnishes no other example."

As for Washington's views about forms of government Jefferson denies that he had any preference for monarchy. On the contrary he held 'correct views of the rights of man'; he 'considered our new constitution as an experiment on the practicability of republican government,



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and with what dose of liberty man could be trusted for his own good'; nay, 'he was determined the experiment should have a fair trial, and would lose the last drop of his blood in support of it.' On the other hand Washington had no firm confidence in the durability of the new American constitution, being 'naturally distrustful of men and inclined to gloomy apprehensions.' So long as Jefferson remained in his Cabinet 'our intercourse was daily, confidential, and cordial'; but later on the federal monarchists took pains 'not entirely without effect, to make him view me as a theorist, holding French principles of government, which would lead infallibly to licentiousness and anarchy.'

At this time Jefferson and Adams were reading an immense biography, rich in episodes and digressions, "of our good and really great Rittenhouse." If the history of the world were written on the same scale, Jefferson remarked, the whole world would not hold it. Rittenhouse was a good astronomer and unequalled in his time as a mechanician; "but placed alongside of Newton" by his overzealous biographer "every human character must appear diminutive, and none would have shrunk more feelingly from the painful parallel than the modest and amiable Rittenhouse."

The news of the fall of Napoleon and his retreat to Elba provoked Jefferson to much the same reflections in prose which are so splendidly embodied in Byron's Ode:—

"The Desolator desolate!  
The Victor overthrown!  
The Arbiter of others' fate!  
A Suppliant for his own!"

Jefferson cries (to John Adams, July 5, 1814): "The Attila of the age dethroned, the ruthless destroyer of ten millions

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of the human race . . . the great oppressor of the rights and liberties of the world, shut up within the circle of a little island of the Mediterranean, and dwindled to the condition of an humble and degraded pensioner on the bounty of those he has most injured. How miserably, ~~how meanly~~, has he closed his inflated career!"

In September, 1814, the raid on Washington and the total failure of the defence filled Jefferson with indignation and humiliation — indignation at the vandalism which had destroyed the public library, and humiliation that with a militia system and an immense potential army America was unable to defend its capital. His explanation was that "our men are so happy at home that they will not hire themselves to be shot at, at a shilling a day." To repair the loss of the public library he immediately offered his own.

In administering consolation to poor Madison after the British raid on Washington, he must have strained his allegiance to truth in the interest of friendship; for he wrote: "In the late events at Washington I have felt so much for you that I cannot withhold the expression of my sympathy. For although every reasonable man must be sensible that all you can do is to order; that executions must depend on others, and failures be imputed to them alone, yet I know that when such failures happen they afflict even those who have done everything they could to prevent them. Had General Washington himself been now at the head of our affairs the same event would probably have happened."

To Monroe, who had just accepted the War Department, he expressed his regret at the change. No one would conduct it better, but it would involve a personal

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sacrifice ; for “were an angel from heaven to undertake that office all our miscarriages would be ascribed to him” :—

“Raw troops, no troops, insubordinate militia, want of arms, want of money, want of provisions, all will be charged to want of management in you. I speak from experience when I was Governor of Virginia. Without a regular in the state, and scarcely a musket to put into the hands of the militia, invaded by two armies, Arnold’s from the seaboard, and Cornwallis’s from the southward, when we were driven from Richmond and Charlottesville, and every member of my Council fled from their homes, it was not the total destitution of means, but the mismanagement of them which in the querulous voice of the public caused all our misfortunes. It ended indeed in the capture of the whole hostile force, but not till means were brought us by General Washington’s army and the French fleet and army ; and although the legislature, who were personally intimate with both the means and measures, acquitted me with justice and thanks, yet General Lee has put all those imputations among the romances of his historical novel, for the amusement of credulous and uninquisitive readers.”<sup>1</sup>

Young George Ticknor of Boston — an American Boswell who travelled after celebrities and recounted his finds with modest gusto in a most agreeable Journal — visited Monticello at the beginning of February, and jotted down some impressions which will be recorded in our next chapter. A week or two later came the joyful news of peace with England. Fortune had played at the end of the war, as at the beginning, one of her mischievous pranks with Time. After peace was signed at Ghent, but before the news had sailed across the Atlantic, the capture of Washington was avenged at New Orleans, where Pakenham, a Peninsula veteran, fell with many of his men in an attack on the American position. In virtue of this *post pacem* triumph Andrew Jackson, the hero of the combat, was destined to create a new type of President, at

<sup>1</sup> January 1, 1815.

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which not only the moneyed worldling and the cultivated prig, but all who looked for taste, dignity, and moderation in their chief magistrate, would stand aghast.

How did Jefferson receive the news? After the éclat of New Orleans he thought that another campaign would have planted their standard on the walls of Quebec and another on those of Halifax.

"But peace is better for us all; and if it could be followed by a cordial conciliation between us and England, it would insure the happiness and prosperity of both. The bag of wind however, on which they are now riding, must be suffered to blow up before they will be able soberly to settle on their true bottom. If they adopt a course of friendship with us, the commerce of 100 millions of people, which some now born will live to see here, will maintain them forever as a great unit of the European family. But if they go on checking, irritating, injuring and hostilizing us, they will force on us the motto *Carthago delenda est*, and some Scipio Americanus will leave to posterity the problem of conjecturing where stood once the ancient and splendid city of London!"

This will recall Macaulay's later and more famous fancy of the traveller from New Zealand, who might one day in the midst of a vast solitude take his stand on a broken arch of London bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. But Jefferson hoped that the good sense of both parties would concur in travelling rather along the paths of peace, of affection, and reciprocations of interest. "The bag of wind" collapsed quickly enough, after one more great triumph for the English nation at Waterloo. Seventeen long, miserable years of commercial depression and political repression were to elapse before the British Reformers triumphed and so paved the way for free trade. But by the time England had opened her markets to America, America was beginning to close hers against Britain.

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During the uncertainty which followed Napoleon's return from Elba Jefferson's opinions fluctuated between detestation of the Continental despot and a fear lest Britain, tyrant of the seas, with France at her feet, might become more intolerant and dangerous than ever. But he hoped she would change. "There is not a nation on the globe with whom I have more earnestly wished a friendly intercourse on equal conditions." Only fools, or those who thought him a fool, could represent him personally as an enemy to England. He was an enemy to the flagitious principles of her administration and foreign policy; but if she would give morality a place in her political code, or at least exercise neutral passions towards America, "there is not, I repeat it, a people on earth with whom I would sacrifice so much to gain friendship. They can do us as enemies more harm than any other nation, and had the war continued, they would have reduced us to the inability to command a single dollar." So he wrote in March to his old friend Caesar Rodney.

In the same month Madison sent him in proof a pamphlet on the causes and conduct of the war, desiring his opinion. Jefferson urged that it should be published, first in order to give the Continent of Europe a true idea of the American character, and to show the peoples that peace and happiness are preferable to that false honour which kept Europe in eternal war and want; secondly, to deceive the people of England as to the true causes of the war; for they thought "it was entirely wanton and wicked on our part and under the order of Bonaparte." Thus the pamphlet would tend to that conciliation which is absolutely necessary to the peace and prosperity of both nations. Thirdly, it would enlighten their people at home, who had been "so plied with false facts and false views

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by the Federalists that an impression has been left that all has not been right." At the same time there were some irritating epithets in the pamphlet which he would like to see removed in order to avoid offence. "A soothing postscript," he thought, "addressed to the interests, prospects, and the sober reason of both nations, would make it acceptable to both."

During the summer some of his republican friends took the side of Napoleon and hailed his return from Elba with delight. One fanatical correspondent declared that he was the religious instrument of the unseen hand. Jefferson did his best to restrain this misguided exuberance. On hearing of Bonaparte's second abdication he rejoiced that the representatives of the people had deposed him. The French nation was now free to give itself a good government either with or without a Bourbon.

Though he was afraid that France might be plundered and robbed by the Allies, he expressed strong hopes that the nations of Europe, hitherto in slavery, had "descried through all this bloody mist a glimmering of their own rights," and that their tyrants would now have to concede more moderate forms of government. In any case Americans must exercise patience and forbearance. "For twenty years to come we should consider peace as the *summum bonum* of our country."

Jefferson's idea of temperance was to substitute beer and wine for spirits. To a friend in the Virginian legislature he recommends (January, 1816) a settler who wanted to establish a brewery in the county of Albemarle. Beer, he hoped, might take the place of whiskey, "which kills one-third of our citizens and ruins their families." If so, America at that time was not quite the Eldorado which Jefferson usually represented it to be in his letters to foreign friends;

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nor is the next paragraph a very cheerful one: "Like a dropsical man calling out for water, water, our deluded citizens are clamouring for more banks, more banks. . . . We are under the bank-bubble as England was under the South Sea Bubble. . . . Confidence is already on the totter, and every one now handles this paper as if playing at Robin's alive." His remedy was to suppress the paper money by degrees.

Of his life at this time we have a glimpse in a letter to his old friend, Charles Thompson, Secretary of the American Congress from 1774 to 1789:—

"I retain good health, am rather feeble to walk much, but ride with ease, passing two or three hours a day on horseback, and every three or four months taking in a carriage a journey of ninety miles to a distant possession where I pass a good deal of my time. My eyes need the aid of glasses by night, and with small print in the day also; my hearing is not quite so sensible as it used to be; no tooth shaking yet, but shivering and shrinking in body from the cold we now experience, my thermometer having been as low as 12 degrees this morning. My greatest oppression is a correspondence afflictingly laborious, the extent of which I have been long endeavouring to curtail. This keeps me at the drudgery of the writing table all the prime hours of the day, leaving for the gratification of my appetite for reading, only what I can steal from the hours of sleep. Could I reduce this epistolary corvée within the limits of my friends and affairs, and give the time redeemed from it to reading and reflection, to history, ethics, mathematics, my life would be as happy as the infirmities of age would admit, and I should look on its consummation with the composure of one '*qui summum nec metuit diem nec optat.*'"

The rest of his correspondence during this last year of Madison's administration reflects the happier conditions of peace, and the busy leisure of a full mind, always ready and eager in spite of his complaints about the epistolary corvée to help friends, acquaintances, strangers in their quest for knowledge and advice. At one time we find him

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explaining to Benjamin Austin why the free trader of 1785 rejoices that domestic manufactures have now freed the United States from dependence on a foreign power, though he foresees that the tariff question may recur again, as indeed it did before the end of his life. At another time to a Maine schoolmaster, who asks for some fragment of morality which may incite his students to the pursuit of virtue, he sends the fine lines of Horace:—

“Quisnam igitur liber? Sapiens, sibi qui imperiosus:  
Quem neque pauperies, neque mors, neque vincula terrent:  
Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores  
Fortis, et in seipso totus teres atque rotundus.”<sup>1</sup>

Then a friend from North Carolina asks where the legislature should go for a statue of General Washington which it wished to set up in the Capitol. Jefferson's answer shows what an expert he was in this branch of art. For the marble they must go to Carrara; for the artist to old Canova of Rome, for thirty years without a rival in Europe. “He draws his blocks from Carrara, and delivers the statue complete and packed for transportation at Rome. As to the price, we gave Houdin at Paris one thousand guineas for the one he made for this state; but he solemnly and feelingly protested against the inadequacy of the price, and evidently undertook it on motives of reputation alone.” As to the costume it should be Roman. “Our boots and regimentals have a very puny effect.” Rome was cheaper than Paris and he thought they would have a good bargain from Canova at \$7000 or \$8000. As to the model they should rely on Ciracchi's

<sup>1</sup> From the Satires; Book II. 7:—“Who then is free? The sage who rules himself; whom neither poverty nor death nor chains affright; strong enough to resist passion and despise honours; complete in himself, well rounded and polished.”



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bust, and a sketch taken from one of the full-length portraits of Washington.

In the early months of 1816 Jefferson discussed in correspondence with Noah Worcester, an early advocate of peace, the question whether nations ever obtain redress of wrongs by war, and with Monroe the question whether the United States should assist the South Americans to assert their independence. Not, he thought, by war; at least not yet; though interest on the whole would wish their independence "and justice makes the wish a duty." They had a right to be free "and we a right to aid them."

Returning to the question of Napoleon and the infatuation of even good republicans over a hero whose downfall they thought calamitous to the cause of liberty, Jefferson points out that because Napoleon was an enemy of England, he was not necessarily a friend of liberty or of America. "In fact, he saw nothing in this world but himself, and looked on the people under him as his cattle — beasts for burden and slaughter." As for the French "their present sufferings will have a term. His iron despotism would have had none. France has now a family of fools at its head, from whom — whenever it can shake off its foreign riders — it will extort a free constitution, or dismount them and establish some other on the solid basis of national right. To whine after this exorcised dæmon is a disgrace to republicans, and must have arisen either from want of reflection, or the indulgence of passion against principle." He felt so strongly about it that he consented to allow his opinions to be published in the press.

Two quite heavy tasks which he undertook in the spring were an elaborate and very able report on an astronomical,

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geometrical, topographical, and mineralogical survey of Virginia for his friend the then Governor, Wilson C. Nicholas; and a revision of the long-delayed translation of Tracy's elementary book on Political Economy, to which he prefixed an introduction. These tasks completed he needed a little recreation, and made a trip to Bedford with Ovid, Cornelius Nepos, and Virgil for companions.

Baron Grimm's Memoirs in fifteen volumes had just come out, and old John Adams, who was devouring them with avidity, asked Jefferson whether he had known him at Paris. "Yes," was the reply, "most intimately. He was the pleasantest and most conversable member of the diplomatic corps while I was there; a man of good fancy, acuteness, irony, cunning, and egoism. No heart, not much of any science, yet enough of every one to speak its language. His forte was belles-lettres, painting, and sculpture. In these he was the oracle of society, and as such was the Empress Catherine's private correspondent and factor." Although he never heard Grimm express a direct opinion on religion, he always supposed him to be of the atheistic school of Diderot and D'Holbach. "It was a numerous school in the Catholic countries, while the infidelity of the Protestants took generally the form of Theism." A most acute remark, which might have been illustrated by such examples as Bolingbroke, Hume, and Tom Paine.

In August, when John Adams teased him with the question whether he would agree to live his seventy-three years over again, he hesitated to say whether he would care to live beyond sixty, though he still enjoyed good health; but added humorously: "Perhaps however, I might accept of time to read Grimm before I go. Fifteen volumes of anecdotes and incidents, within the compass of my own

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time and cognizance, written by a man of genius and taste, of point, an acquaintance, the measure and traverses of whose mind I know, could not fail to turn the scale in favour of life during their perusal. I must write to Ticknor to add it to my catalogue and hold on till it comes." By this time he was again bubbling over with optimism about his own country: "We are destined to be a barrier against the returns of ignorance and barbarism. Old Europe will have to lean on our shoulders, and to hobble along by our side, under the monkish trammels of priests and kings as she can. What a Colossus shall we be when the Southern continent comes up to our mark. . . . I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past — so good night! I will dream on, always fancying that Mrs. Adams and yourself are by my side marking the progress and the obliquities of ages and countries."

A few days afterwards to a lady who had heard a rumour of his conversion he wrote: "My opinion is that there would never have been an infidel if there had never been a priest."

The style and vigour of these letters leave no doubt that, whatever he may have said about decay in passing moods, Jefferson's mind was in perfect vigour; indeed he never wrote better.

Just before the end of Madison's administration his successor, James Monroe, the last of the Virginian Dynasty, then Secretary of State, asked advice about an inscription on the restored Capitol at Washington. Two were proposed. Jefferson said they were too long. If any were needed, it should be: "Founded 1791, burnt by a British army 1814, restored by Congress 1817." But he questioned whether there should be one at all. With the prospects now opening of peace in the republic of nations,

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should they do anything to perpetuate hatred against England? "Should we not on the contrary begin to open ourselves to other and more rational dispositions?" Wise men in England and America would begin to think of the interests of both countries, and Jefferson thought it would be better "to prepare the minds of our citizens for a corresponding change of dispositions by acts of comity towards England rather than by commemoration of hatred." He felt sure too that the British government and constitution would soon be reformed. "Were they once under a government," so he wrote to Adams, "which should treat us with justice and equity I should myself feel with great strength the ties which bind us together of origin, language, laws, and manners; and I am persuaded the two peoples would become in future, as it was with the ancient Greeks, among whom it was reproachful for Greek to be found fighting against Greek in a foreign army."

With these noble sentiments, prophetic of the future, we may fitly pass to the era of good will, as Monroe's administration has been called. But first let us pause to take a look at Monticello, its gardens and its library.

## CHAPTER II

### MONTICELLO AND ITS LIBRARY

"And our own dear Monticello: where has nature spread so rich a mantle under the eye? Mountains, forests, rocks, rivers. With what majesty do we there ride above the storms! How sublime to look down into the workhouse of nature, to see her clouds, hail, snow, rain, thunder, all fabricated at our feet! And the glorious sun when rising, as if out of a distant water, just gilding the tops of the mountains, and giving life to all nature."

To MRS. COSWAY, 1786

"All my wishes end, where I hope my days will end, at Monticello. Too many scenes of happiness mingle themselves with all the recollections of my native woods and fields, to suffer them to be supplanted in my affection by any other."

To GEORGE GILMER, 1787

IT is fashionable nowadays to affix tablets to houses where famous men are known, or supposed, to have lived, and even to convert them into shrines where their memories may be cherished and relics of their deeds preserved. The instinct is natural and laudable. We are grateful for the patriotism which has saved the house of Shakespeare, of Sir Walter Scott, of George Washington. If a hero deserves to be worshipped, his home deserves to be maintained. And there are some houses so interwoven with a noble life, so beautiful in themselves, so laden with history, that it were a national crime to let them perish in decay. America has just become aware that Monticello is one of her national treasures. Mount Vernon does not tell us more of Washington than Monticello of Jefferson. ||



MONTICELLO—RESIDENCE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON



## Monticello and Its Library

For a glimpse of Monticello at the height of its fame we are indebted to George Ticknor, the young Bostonian, who, luckily, wrote an account of his first visit to Jefferson while the impressions were still fresh. "We left Charlottesville," he says, "on Saturday morning, the 4th of February [1815], for Mr. Jefferson's":—

"He lives you know on a mountain which he has named Monticello. . . . The ascent of this steep, savage hill was as pensive and slow as Satan's ascent to Paradise. We were obliged to wind two thirds round its sides before we reached the artificial lawn on which the house stands; and when we had arrived there we were about six hundred feet, I understand, above the stream which flows at its foot. It is an abrupt mountain. The fine growth of ancient forest trees conceals its sides and shades part of its summit. The prospect is admirable. . . . The lawn on the top was artificially formed by cutting down the peak of the height. In its center and facing the south east Mr. Jefferson has placed his house, which is of brick, two stories high in the wings, with a piazza in front of a receding center. You enter by a glass folding-door into a hall which reminds you of Fielding's 'Man of the Mountain' by the strange furniture of its walls. On one side hang the head and horns of an elk, a deer, and a buffalo; another is covered with curiosities which Lewis and Clark found in their wild and perilous expedition. On the third . . . was the head of a mammoth, or, as Cuvier calls it, a mastodon, containing the only *os frontis*, Mr. Jefferson tells me, that has yet been found. On the fourth side, in odd union with a fine painting of the Repentance of Saint Peter, is an Indian map on leather of the southern waters of the Missouri, and an Indian representation of a bloody battle, handed down in their traditions.

Through this hall—or rather museum—we passed to the dining room, and sent our letters to Mr. Jefferson, who was of course in his study. Here again we found ourselves surrounded with paintings that seemed good."

They had hardly time to glance at the pictures before their host entered. Ticknor was astonished at the dignity of his appearance and the ease and grace of his manners. As dinner time approached, Jefferson took his guests to



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the drawing room, "a large and rather elegant room twenty or thirty feet high, which with the hall I have described composes the whole centre of the house from top to bottom. The floor of this room is tessellated. It is formed of alternate diamonds of cherry and beech, and kept polished as highly as if it were of fine mahogany." Here were the best pictures of the collection — the Laughing and Weeping Philosophers dividing the world between them; the earliest navigators to America, Columbus, Americus Vespuccius, Magellan, etc., copies from the originals in the Florence gallery. Then there was Madison in the plain, quaker-like dress of his youth, Lafayette in his Revolutionary uniform, and Benjamin Franklin. In conversation Ticknor was impressed by Jefferson's love of paradox, his discursive manner, his fondness for American antiquities, and his love of old books and young society.

Goldsmith makes Squire Hardcastle say to young Marlow and Hastings when they mistook his house for an inn, "This is Liberty Hall, gentlemen; you may do just as you please here." Jefferson was equally easy with his guests; but everything at Monticello went with clockwork regularity. At eight o'clock, writes Ticknor, the first bell is rung in the great hall, "and at nine the second summons you to the breakfast room, where you find everything ready": —

"After breakfast everyone goes, as inclination leads him, to his chamber, the drawing-room, or the library. The children retire to the school room with their mother; Mr. Jefferson rides to his mills on the Rivanna, and returns at about twelve. At half past three the great bell rings, and those who are disposed resort to the drawing-room, and the rest go to the dining room at the second call of the bell, which is at four o'clock. The dinner is always choice, and served in the French style; but no wine was set on the table till the cloth was removed. The ladies

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sat until about six, then retired, but returned with the tea-tray a little before seven, and spent the evening with the gentlemen; which was always pleasant, for they are obviously accustomed to join in the conversation, however high the topic may be. At about half past ten, which seemed to be their usual hour of retiring, I went to my chamber, found there a fire, candle, and a servant in waiting to receive my orders for the morning, and in the morning was waked by his return to build the fire."

On Sunday morning after breakfast Jefferson took Ticknor into the Library, where the Bostonian spent many hours, and saw some of the curiosities. "This collection of books," he says, "now so much talked about,<sup>1</sup> consists of about seven thousand volumes, contained in a suite of fine rooms; and is arranged in the catalogue and on the shelves according to the divisions and subdivisions of human learning by Lord Bacon." He was shown "The Book of Kings," consisting of several volumes of regal scandal, such as the Trial of the Duke of York. They "seemed to be favourites with the philosopher, who pointed them out to me with a satisfaction somewhat inconsistent with the measured gravity he claims in relation to such subjects generally." There was indeed a "breathing of notional philosophy" in Mr. Jefferson — in his dress, his house, his conversation — which puzzled the primness of a New Englander. Ticknor wondered how a person of such eminence and fine manners could wear sharp-toed shoes and a red plush waist-coat. They would have been laughed at in Boston.

Ticknor does not mention — probably he was not shown — the 'Jefferson Bible', then an octavo of 46 pages. Its title page — in Jefferson's handwriting — runs: — 'The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth extracted textually from the gospels in Greek, Latin and English.' During

<sup>1</sup> Congress was just then wrangling over the purchase of Jefferson's library.

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the winter of 1816-17 Jefferson enlarged his little treasury of Christian morals to 83 pages, and had it bound in red leather. The texts in the three languages are cut out and arranged in parallel columns. This so-called 'Jefferson Bible' passed into the possession of Sarah N. Randolph. After her death in 1895 it was sold by her sister to the United States National Museum at Washington, and a facsimile edition of 9000 copies was printed by order of Congress. Jefferson was in the habit of reading his anthology before going to bed. 'A more beautiful or precious morsel of ethics,' he wrote to a friend, 'I have never seen; it is a document in proof that *I am a real Christian*, that is to say a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus.'

A day or two later the time came to leave, and their host seemed surprised. Evidently he had counted on their staying a week; but though he urged them to remain a little longer it was "not in an oppressive way, but with kind politeness." On finding his guests resolved to go "he bade us farewell in the heartiest style of southern hospitality. . . . I came away almost regretting that the coach returned so soon, and thinking with General Hamilton that he was a perfect gentleman in his own house."

A calamity befell the estate during Ticknor's visit. One morning, when Jefferson came back from his ride, he said very quietly that the dam had been carried away the night before. "From his manner I supposed it an affair of small consequence; but at Charlottesville on my way to Richmond I found the country ringing with it. Mr. Jefferson's great dam was gone, and it would cost \$30,000 to rebuild it."

Monticello, be it remembered, was not merely Jefferson's home but Jefferson's creation. He was its architect

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and master builder. He had chosen the site. He was the landscape gardener who had laid out the grounds, the botanist who had selected and planted the flowers, shrubs, and trees.

Another cultivated traveller, Francis Hall, an English Lieutenant, who visited Monticello a year or two later, has also left us a pleasant account of his experiences. Jefferson entertained him with an unabated flow of conversation on the most interesting topics, and walked round the grounds showing his pet trees and improvements:—

“During the walk he pointed out to my observation a conical mountain, rising singly at the edge of the southern horizon of the landscape: its distance, he said, was forty miles, and its dimensions those of the greater Egyptian pyramid; so that it accurately represents the appearance of the pyramid at the same distance; there is a small cleft visible on its summit, through which the true meridian of Monticello exactly passes; its most singular property, however, is that on different occasions it looms, or alters its appearance, becoming sometimes cylindrical, sometimes square, and sometimes assuming the form of an inverted cone.”

Jefferson discussed with philosophical courtesy the economic state of England and the likelihood of political reform. Hall was enchanted:—

“I slept a night at Monticello, and left it in the morning, with such a feeling as the traveller quits the mouldering remains of a Grecian temple, or the pilgrim a fountain in the desert. It would indeed argue a great torpor, both of understanding and heart, to have looked without veneration and interest on the man who drew up the Declaration of American Independence, who shared in the councils by which her freedom was established; whom the unbought voice of his fellow-citizens called to the exercise of a dignity, from which his own moderation impelled him, when such an example was most salutary, to withdraw; and who, while he dedicates the evening of his glorious days to the pursuits of science and literature, shuns none of the humbler duties of private life; but, having filled a seat higher than that of kings, succeeds

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with graceful dignity to that of the good neighbour, and becomes the friendly adviser, lawyer, physician, and even gardener of his vicinity."

The early history of Monticello has been told in previous chapters. After his return from France, where he had studied French and Roman architecture, and from his visits to some of the famous English parks and gardens, Jefferson began to remodel Monticello on more strictly classical lines. In 1911 Mr. Thomas Jefferson Coolidge had the good fortune to discover a bundle of Jefferson's architectural drawings. They were presented to the Massachusetts Historical Society, and were used by Dr. Fiske Kimball in his beautiful volume *Thomas Jefferson, Architect*, published recently by the Riverside Press. These sketches and designs exhibit Jefferson's skill in draughtsmanship, his creative power, and the infinite pains he took to acquire mastery of his favorite art. "They are of a number and elaborateness," writes Dr. Kimball, "unexampled in America until long afterwards:—

"Nowhere else can the mental processes of an early American architect and the inner development of his designs be followed so closely. . . . In the pervasive classical revival common to Europe and America, of which Jefferson's work forms a part, it will be found that his position was not always derivative and secondary, in comparison to European standards, but that in certain respects he anticipated corresponding buildings in other countries, and in some other directions gave to American architecture an original direction."

His master almost from the beginning was Palladio; but Monticello is a Jeffersonian conception, in which many models are assimilated. Stanford White, the architect of some later additions to the University of Virginia, was an enthusiastic admirer of Monticello, whose every proportion and detail, he declared, are perfect.

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Another competent admirer, Dr. William A. Lambeth, calls Monticello "the first born of Jefferson's architectural children, the most ingenious, and in many respects the most difficult." It was "a step forward in the art of home building." Earlier Virginian builders had disfigured their Colonial houses by crowding round them offices for the conduct of a planter's business, and shops for weaving, dyeing, distilling, wagon-making, etc. Jefferson concealed these woeful uglinesses to preserve the amenities of his home. In the mansion itself "dish-washers and cooks, butlers and maids came quietly through concealed passages . . . they ascended and descended stairs which had been cunningly tucked away in unobtrusive fashion." A French nobleman of taste, the Marquis de Chastellux, was so smitten with Monticello that he introduced a description of it into his book of travels. Mr. Jefferson, he proclaimed, "is the first American who has consulted the fine arts to find out how to shelter himself from the weather."

Jefferson was not only an architect; he was a landscape gardener, a learned botanist, an enthusiastic cultivator of flowers, fruits, and vegetables. On laying out his gardens and grounds he bestowed as much thought and pains as on building the house. A memorandum of "General Ideas for the Improvement of Monticello," which he set down in 1804, aims at eliminating from his pleasure grounds the aspect of a farm, "while retaining such profitable cultivation and use as this requirement would permit." The upper part of the mountain was to be the pleasure ground or garden proper, with lawns and groves of tall trees, diversified by thickets, "all so arranged as to give advantageous prospects" from the paths or roundabouts which circled the mountain. The lower slopes were

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to be converted into a park and riding grounds with the farm lands planted as orchards.<sup>1</sup> In this memorandum Jefferson proposes that a spring on Montalto should either be brought to Monticello by pipes or should fall over steps in cascades made visible from the house through a vista. A fish pond was also to be constructed in sight of the house. Plantations of oaks, poplars, elms, maples, etc. were to be broken at intervals by clumps of thicket "as the open grounds of the English are broken by clumps of trees." His favourite plants for these thickets were broom, guelder rose, magnolias, azaleas, dogwood, rhododendron, honeysuckle, and bramble. He thought too of recesses in which there might be constructed "a temple or seat."

We find that in 1812 one of these garden houses or temples was erected; but Jefferson's dwindling financial resources were inadequate to carry out all the details of his ambitious plan, though small additions and improvements went on almost to the end. As he once said to a visitor: "architecture is my delight, and putting up and pulling down one of my favourite amusements."

No account of Monticello would be complete if the library, selected and collected with no small care and expense, were left out of the picture. It is a subject so little known that we shall pause to describe some of its features. Jefferson was more than a collector and reader of books. He was a scientific librarian. When President he took a keen interest in improving the Library of Congress, as appears from a letter he wrote to the Librarian, Abraham Baldwin, on April 14, 1802, enclosing a catalogue which he had prepared. After explaining the classes of books most useful to members of the legislature he winds up:—

<sup>1</sup> See Fiske Kimball, *Thomas Jefferson, Architect*, p. 69.

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"This catalogue, combined with what you may approve in those offered by others, will enable you to form your general plan and to select from it every year to the amount of the annual fund of those most wanting.

I have omitted from it those which by the printed catalogue I find you already possess. In estimating the amount of an annual selection, folios may be stated as costing one and a half guineas, quartos a guinea, octavos, 12/-, twelvemos 4/- in England, and in France three-fourths of those prices, in neat but not splendid bindings."

Jefferson had thought of leaving his library to the University of Virginia; but in August, 1814, when the British set fire to the Capitol, the Congressional Library, to which he had given many books, was almost wholly destroyed. A few weeks later (September 21) Jefferson offered his library to Congress on such terms as they might choose to fix. In the letter conveying this offer to his friend, Samuel Harrison Smith, he describes it as follows:—

"You know my collection, its condition and extent. I have been fifty years making it, and have spared no pains, opportunity or expense, to make it what it is. While residing in Paris, I devoted every afternoon I was disengaged, for a summer or two, in examining all the principal bookstores, turning over every book with my own hand, and putting by everything which related to America, and indeed whatever was rare and valuable in every science. Besides this, I had standing orders during the whole time I was in Europe, on its principal book-marts, particularly Amsterdam, Frankfort, Madrid and London, for such works relating to America as could not be found in Paris. So that in that department particularly, such a collection was made as probably can never again be effected, because it is hardly probable that the same opportunities, the same time, industry, perseverance and expense, with some knowledge of the bibliography of the subject, would again happen to be in concurrence. During the same period, and after my return to America, I was led to procure, also, whatever related to the duties of those in the high concerns of the nation. So that the collection, which I suppose is of between nine and ten thousand volumes, while it includes what is chiefly valuable in science and literature generally, extends more particularly to whatever belongs to American



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statesmen. In the diplomatic and parliamentary branches, it is particularly full. . . . I enclose you the catalogue, which will enable them to judge of the contents. Nearly the whole are well bound, abundance of them elegantly, and of the choicest editions existing."

To the President, James Madison, he wrote on September 24: —

"Learning by the papers the loss of the library of Congress, I have sent my catalogue to S. H. Smith, to make their Library Committee the offer of my collection, now of about nine or ten thousand volumes, which may be delivered to them instantly, on a valuation by persons of their own naming, and be paid for in any way, and at any term they please; in stock, for example, of any loan they have unissued, or of any they may institute at this session; or in such annual instalments as are at the disposal of the committee. I believe you are acquainted with the condition of the books, should they wish to be ascertained of this. I have long been sensible that my library would be an interesting possession for the public, and the loss Congress has recently sustained, and the difficulty of replacing it, while our intercourse with Europe is so obstructed, renders this the proper moment for placing it at their service."

On October 7 the offer was laid before the Senate, where political opponents at once began to raise objections on the score of its cost, its extent, and its utility. Some complained that many of the books were in foreign languages and therefore useless to the average reader, others that it contained works of an atheistical and immoral character, which might corrupt Congress. One member desired that the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Locke should be returned to the owner. The newspapers, however, generally supported the purchase, poured ridicule on the narrow-minded legislators, and congratulated the country on the opportunity thus presented of acquiring "the finest library in America."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Johnston's *History of the Library of Congress* contains a good deal of information about Jefferson's Library.

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Finally on January 30, 1815, after much wrangling, Congress agreed to purchase the whole collection of 6,500 books<sup>1</sup> for \$23,950 "in Treasury notes," and at the end of March the books were all catalogued, sealed up, and sent to Washington where they were housed in a wing of the Capitol building. It was a mean offer; for the original cost is said to have been at least double. But Jefferson accepted it without a murmur.

Here the collection remained until December 24, 1851, when a fire broke out in the Library and consumed about two-thirds of Jefferson's books. The remainder, some two thousand, are now housed in the Superintendent's Office, a long narrow room off the General Reading Room of the Congressional Library, where they cover most of the three walls. In a letter to Congress, December 25, 1851, the Librarian wrote that most of Jefferson's books under the heads of moral philosophy, politics, history, and law had been saved.

Under Politics and the Law of Nations the Librarian seems to have been too sanguine; for many important items are missing. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* has disappeared, and the whole of Locke's works. From the Law division Blackstone and Coke are gone; but in the section on international law will be found two copies of Selden's *Mare Clausum*. The entire collection of modern poets, playwrights, etc. was destroyed, most of his grammars and dictionaries and, sad to say, his geographical collection, including many rare books and maps such as those which he consulted for his notes on the Louisiana purchase.

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson kept a number of duplicates and some others. He also replaced by purchases in Europe some of his favourite authors with the help of young Ticknor "the best bibliograph," as he wrote, "I have ever met with." He could not live without books.

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The remaining books are arranged on steel shelves rising from floor to ceiling. Many of them have been rebound; the originals are mostly in full calf bindings, with perhaps a dozen in vellum, including Erasmus, Epictetus, Boethius, and a volume of Machiavelli's letters. Most of the books are in English, Latin, French, and Greek; but there are some also in Italian, Spanish, German, Norse, Gaelic, and Hebrew.

I may here quote some notes made for me by a friend<sup>1</sup> who examined the collection: —

Only two that I opened had his name written in (Turgot and Epictetus); the others are all marked with his peculiar mark. Wherever the printer's signature occurs at the bottom of the page as an I or J he has made a T. before it, and where T. occurs a J. after it; making the initials of his name. This occurs in nearly all his books.

He rarely marked passages, and his books seem to have been carefully handled. Some of them are presentation copies, among them Dugald Stewart's *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, with a letter on the fly leaf dated Oct. 1, 1792 hoping that you "will do me the honour to give it a place in your library, and that you will accept of it as a mark of my grateful recollection of the attentions which I received at Paris."

The dates of publication of the books I saw range from 1497 to 1812. The majority of his classics are sixteenth century editions, and included a beautiful Aldine Plutarch, 8 vols. folio, 1509, and a good many Aldine octavos.

On the fly leaf of a *Life of Homer* (Thomas Blackwell, 3d edition, London, 1759), Jefferson has written: —

"A man who would enquire why . . . Homer existed at such a place, in such a time, would throw himself headlong into chimaera, and could never treat of such a subject without a multitude of false subtleties and refinements. He might as well pretend to give a reason why . . . Fabius came into the world before Scipio. For such incidents as those no other reason can be given but that of Horace: —

<sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy Wilcox, now Mrs. W. F. Adams.

## Monticello and Its Library

Scit genius, natale comes qui temperat astrum,  
Naturae deus humanae, mortalis in unum  
Quodque caput, vultu mutabilis, albus et ater.<sup>1</sup>

A copy of Middleton's *Life of Cicero* (London, 1741) is marked in a good many places with Jefferson's characteristic ✓. On page 7 he has marked the phrase "the more Greek they knew, the greater knaves they were." Some marked passages in the first chapter recall an outline of study which he drew up for a young university student after he himself had left college. One sentence — "and never passed one day without writing and reading something at home" — is twice underscored. The copy of Stith's *History of Virginia* contains many notes and corrections.

The books are still arranged according to Jefferson's classification, which was based on Bacon's division of the faculties of the mind, and appears in the preface to the printed catalogue of his books. Jefferson's method, with some few changes, was adopted for the whole Library of Congress and continued in use down to the end of the nineteenth century. W. D. Johnston, in his *History of the Library of Congress* remarks: "The system of classification was an innovation in the book world, which seems to have been appreciated by intelligent visitors to the Library."

To an explorer of Jefferson's opinions the most interesting part of the collection is the section on Ethics, 210 works, and on politics, about 500 works. The Ethics

<sup>1</sup> From Horace. Epistles II. 2. 187. Conington's translation runs: —

"None but he who watches them from birth,  
The genius, guardian of each child of earth,  
Born when we're born and dying when we die,  
Now storm, now sunshine, knows the reason why."

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include Bolingbroke, Hutcheson, Hume, Condorcet, Spinoza, Kant (in a French translation), Seneca, Epictetus, etc., and nearly a score of books and pamphlets on negro slavery. In the political collection are found the writers who influenced Wythe and Jefferson, when Jefferson's opinions were being formed by study and discussion at Williamsburg. Of these the most important are Harrington's *Oceana*, Sydney's *Discourses on Government*, Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (London, 1680), Locke, whose works are unfortunately missing, and Montesquieu. Among later works we notice Beccaria's *Crimes and Punishments* and Bentham's *Panopticon*. Among several passages marked in Filmer one is of particular interest, as it helps to dispose of the fanciful and erroneous theory that Jefferson was a disciple of Rousseau and borrowed from him the doctrine of natural rights. In this marked passage (on page 2 of the *Patriarcha*, written before Rousseau was born) Filmer observes that since School Divinity began to flourish a common opinion has been maintained which affirms that "mankind is naturally endowed and born with freedom from all subjection, and at liberty to choose what form of government it pleases; and that Power which any one Man hath over others was at first bestowed according to the discretion of the Multitude."

On page 4 Jefferson has marked the words "Natural Equality and Freedom of Mankind, and Liberty to choose what form of Government it please," and again the following sentence: —

"yet all of them, when they come to the Argument drawn from the Natural Liberty and Equality of Mankind, do with one consent admit it for a Truth unquestionable, not so much as once denying it; whereas, if they did but confute this first erroneous Principle, the whole Fabrick of this vast Engine of Popular Sedition would drop down of itself."

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In Jefferson's copy of Harrington's *Oceana* there are only one or two typographical corrections. Harrington's influence, as it seems to me, has been exaggerated. He was too much of a doctrinaire, and his book is too dull to attract practical reformers in a progressive age. But the *Oceana* has its place in the history of modern democratic institutions, especially in America. Though concerned with machinery it has behind it a moral and political purpose. Harrington, as Mr. G. P. Gooch has remarked, advocates the principle of rotation in office, because he believes in the inexhaustible supply of worthy and capable men ready to bear their part in the drama of Government. This belief, too often fallacious, was undoubtedly indulged by Jefferson, who held also with Harrington and Baxter that men are wise enough to choose the wise and good enough to choose the good.

Of Algernon Sydney's celebrated *Discourses on Government* — which supplied a good republican answer to Filmer's monarchical doctrines — two editions have been saved from the fire. The one used and marked by Jefferson is the well-known folio (London, 1763), edited by Thomas Hollis, an English free thinker notorious in the middle of the eighteenth century for his republican opinions. Some of the passages marked by Jefferson are worth citing. He notes in the Contents of the *Discourses*: "the common notions of liberty are not from the school divines, but from Nature."

That his opinions were in the true line of democratic descent from Sydney will be evident, I think, from a few of the marked passages: —

Section V. For, as liberty solely consists in an independency upon the will of another, and by the name of slave we understand a man, who

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can neither dispose of his person nor goods, but enjoys all at the will of his master, there is no such thing in nature as a slave, if those men or nations are not slaves who have no other title to what they enjoy than the grace of the prince, which he may reſcye whenever he pleases.

Section VII. Just governments are established for the good of the governed.

Section XXXI. And I say that nations, being naturally free, may meet, when and where they please; may dispose of the sovereignty, and may direct or limit the exercise of it, unless by their own act they have deprived themselves of that right; and there could never have been a lawful assembly of any people in the world, if they had not that power in themselves.

Section XXXIII. If any man ask how nations come to have the power of doing these things, I answer that liberty being only an exemption from the dominion of another the question ought not to be how a nation can come to be free but how a man comes to have dominion over it; for till the right of dominion be proved and justified, liberty subsists as arising from the nature and being of a man. . . . Man therefore must be naturally free, unless he be created by another power than we have yet heard of.

Is it too strong an inference from these passages that they were the fountain from which Jefferson drew inspiration when he began to pamphleteer against English encroachments on Colonial liberties?

We may guess that Jefferson's advocacy of rapid rotation in office came from Harrington, but his obligations to Sydney are certain and unmistakable. When President, on June 11, 1807, he wrote to a correspondent: "I think there does not exist a good elementary work on the organisation of society into civil government; I mean a work which presents in a full and comprehensive view the system or principles on which such an organisation should be founded according to the rights of nature." For want of a single work of that character he recommended Locke on Government, Sydney's Discourses, an essay of Priest-

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ley's, and the *Federalist*. To which he added Beccaria on Crime, Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and Say's *Political Economy*.

Political research is often employed in tracing the origin of a great statesman's ideas; and such an enquiry is especially fruitful for the interpretation of Jefferson; for Jefferson from first to last was a student and a book lover, always seeking after Truth and Light, a theorist too, always in search of arguments and illustrations to support a democratic view of society. But let us beware of falling into the error so natural to explorers in this field, of supposing that every resemblance is proof of imitation or plagiarism. It was in this spirit that John Adams and others tried hard to show that Jefferson had borrowed the language and ideas of the Declaration of Independence from various writers great and small, eminent and obscure. Jefferson had much in common with Paine. But it would be wrong to say that Paine borrowed his ideas from Jefferson, or that Jefferson borrowed his ideas from Paine, or that both were servile copyists of Algernon Sydney.

For a mind so strong, comprehensive, and original as that of Jefferson we neither require nor expect to find a prototype. He is a master, not a disciple, much as he loved his library, familiar as he was through books with past ages. Among his contemporaries he owed most perhaps to Dr. Small and George Wythe in his student days, and later on to Franklin, Priestley, and Madison.

It would be hard to say whether he inherited more from books, or from conversation. But his mind assimilated and compounded until at last he formed a system of political philosophy peculiarly his own — Jeffersonian Democracy, which may be compared and contrasted with the philosophic radicalism of Bentham, with the Manchester



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School of Cobden, or with the doctrines of Turgot and the Encyclopædists.

A stranger, to whom Jefferson had shown his library, published many years afterwards (in 1813) some hazy recollections of what he saw. One of the curiosities mentioned was a volume of slanders composed of newspaper cuttings. Thereupon John Adams wrote to ask Jefferson about it. Jefferson replied that the statement was incorrect. Had he collected slanders, they would have made not a single volume but an encyclopædia : —

“I never had such a volume. Indeed I rarely thought those libels worth the reading, much less preserving and remembering. At the end of every year I generally sorted all my pamphlets and had them bound according to their subjects. One of these volumes consisted of personal altercations between individuals, and calumnies on each other. This was lettered on the back Personalities, and is now in the Library of Congress.”

Then he went on to mention a more agreeable pastime. “I was in the habit also, while living apart from my family, of cutting out of the newspapers such morsels of poetry, or tales, as I thought would please, and of sending them to my grandchildren, who pasted them on leaves of blank paper and formed them into a book.”<sup>1</sup>

Jefferson was a fairy godfather to the smaller members of his household. One of them, Virginia Trist, a great grandchild, wrote down some memoirs in 1839; and a few sentences from these may fitly conclude our chapter. She describes the game he arranged for them indoors and outdoors, and how when he went out to walk in the garden, the children raced after him. “He would gather fruit for us, seek out the ripest figs, or bring down the cherries from on high above our heads with a long stick, at the

<sup>1</sup> To John Adams, February 25, 1823.

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end of which there was a hook and little net bag." He combined the offices of handicapper, time keeper, and prize giver for races on the lawn and terrace. His ingenuity in devising presents and amusements for the children was endless.

"On winter evenings, when it grew too dark to read, in the half hour which passed before candles came in, as we all sat round the fire, he taught us several childish games, and would play them with us. I remember that 'Cross-questions,' and 'I love my love with an A,' were two I learned from him; and we would teach some of ours to him. When the candles were brought, all was quiet immediately, for he took up his book to read; and we would not speak out of a whisper, lest we should disturb him; and generally we followed his example and took a book; and I have seen him raise his eyes from his own book, and look round on the little circle of readers and smile, and make some remark to mamma about it. When the snow fell, we would go out, as soon as it stopped, to clear it off the terraces with shovels, that he might have his usual walk on them without treading in snow."

## CHAPTER III

THE MONROE ADMINISTRATIONS — 1817 TO 1825

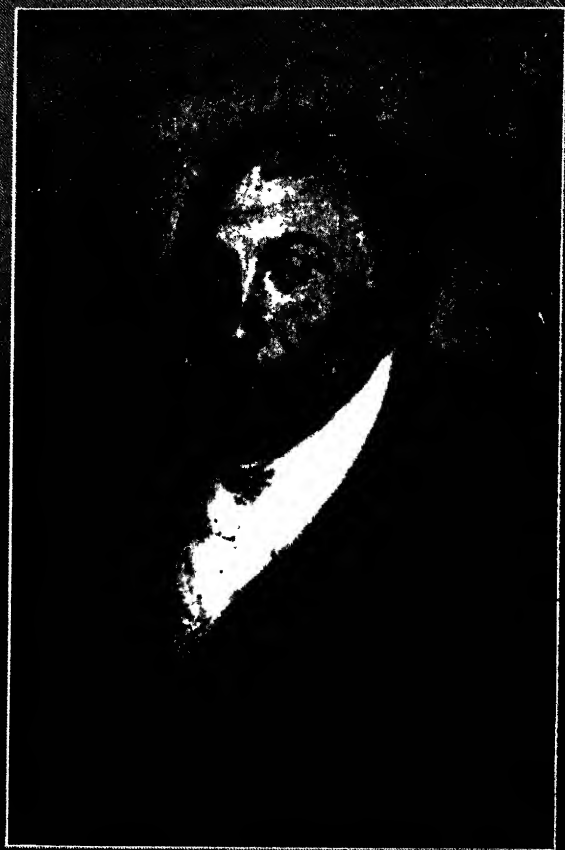
*ERA OF GOOD FEELING—JEFFERSON'S OLD AGE*

“Here

Is nature's secretary, the philosopher  
And wily statesman.”

WE have seen how, on the eve of James Monroe's election to the Presidency, Jefferson had written to advise a change of policy towards England, acts of comity rather than commemorations of hatred. These seeds of good counsel fell on good ground, and on the whole Monroe's two administrations from 1817 to 1825 were correctly designated as 'The Era of Good Feeling' at home and abroad. The words, it appears, were first used by the *Boston Sentinel* in July, 1817, when the President's visit to the fortress of Federalism was promoting good will and allaying the party passions which had been kindled by the fire and fury of the French Revolution. The Federalists indeed must have felt that their day was over; for at the presidential election their candidate, Rufus King, had received but 34 votes against 183 for Monroe. Only three states, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Delaware, had chosen Federalist electors. And so it came about that with the subsidence of party conflict this phrase was generally adopted as the symbol of Monroe's government.

“ 'Tis what our President Monroe  
Has called 'the era of good feeling,' ”



*Painted by Stuart*



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wrote Fitz-Greene Halleck, a popular poetaster of the day, in his *Alnwick Castle*.

James Monroe, last of the Virginian Dynasty, which had governed the United States with only one break since the adoption of the Constitution, and last President of the heroic age of Independence, was a Jeffersonian to his finger tips. By Jefferson's favour he had risen in the war to the rank of Colonel. Under Jefferson's guidance he had studied the law and embarked on a great career of public service as Senator, diplomatist, Secretary of State, and President. Jefferson loved him as an elder brother might love a younger committed to his charge. "A man whose soul might be turned wrong side outwards without discovering a blemish to the world," was his verdict on Monroe in 1786. The reader will remember how more than once he exerted himself to smooth the ruffled susceptibilities of Monroe, and especially when a rivalry for the presidency arose in 1808. "I have ever viewed Mr. Madison and yourself as two principal pillars of my happiness," he wrote on that occasion; and great was his joy when a little later Monroe joined Madison's administration as Secretary of State, and so qualified for the succession. Though he had not at first the same confidence in Monroe's discretion and judgment which he reposed in Madison, he thought him 'honest and brave,' and praised his enterprise, firmness, industry, unceasing vigilance, and competence to embrace great views of action. He believed Monroe's principles to be as truly republican as those of any man living, and in a letter to La Fayette described his election to the presidency as no inefficient circumstance in their felicities: "Four and twenty years which he will accomplish of administration in republican forms and principles will so consecrate them

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in the eyes of the people as to secure them against the danger of change. The evanition of party dissensions has harmonised intercourse and sweetened society beyond imagination." A couple of years later he declared: "I have had, and still have, such entire confidence in the late and present Presidents that I willingly put both soul and body into their pockets."

From France Jefferson had written thirty years earlier a letter begging Monroe to settle in the neighbourhood of Albemarle, where he hoped also to have Short and Madison as neighbours. "This," he wrote, "will be society enough, and it will be the great sweetener of our lives. Without society, and a society to our taste, men are never contented." He hoped that Mrs. Monroe, a favourite at Monticello, would accept the testimony of one who had tried scenes of bustle and office that the distractions of town life could bear no comparison with rural felicity. Eventually Monroe did settle 3 or 4 miles away at Ash Lawn; and all through his presidency the two friends were in constant and affectionate intercourse. Jefferson was well content to let the administration, whose foreign policy was ably conducted by the President and his experienced Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, pursue its own course. But he was often consulted; and on one or two critical occasions, as we shall see, there is correspondence to show how much his opinion was valued and how little his public spirit slumbered. Though the decline and fall of Federalism had left the Republican party supreme, the absence of an efficient opposition tended to generate differences within the party itself and to magnify personal ambitions and factions. A school of loose constructionists arose in the Republican ranks, and carried through both Houses an Act for expending Federal money

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on roads, canals, and similar internal improvements. Monroe, with the approval of Jefferson, withheld his signature on the ground that a new power of such importance should be provided for by an amendment to the Constitution; for if it were admitted under the general authority granted by the Constitution to "provide for the general welfare," there would be no limit to the encroachments of the Federal government on the functions reserved to the States.

Jefferson's correspondence from 1817 onward is as remarkable as ever for its variety. One of his correspondents sent him an extract from Wirt's *Life of Patrick Henry*, which quoted Jefferson as saying that "Mr. Henry certainly gave the first impulse to the ball of revolution." Jefferson replied that he was speaking of the revolution in Virginia. The question who commenced the Revolution was as difficult to answer as the question who invented the steam boat, or who discovered the principle of gravity. In the case of the American Revolution "this question of priority is as the inquiry would be who first of the three hundred Spartans offered his name to Leonidas." To this happy similitude we may add another from ancient Greece to illustrate the position in which Jefferson found himself, a position wholly unlike that ever occupied before or since by any retired American statesman. Monticello was to Americans as the oracle of Delphi had been to the Hellenes. To it pilgrims resorted from far and near — men of all creeds, and opinions. As a member of his household wrote years afterwards "some came from affection and respect, some from curiosity, some to give or receive advice or instruction, some from idleness, some because others set the example." The pilgrimages to Hawarden Castle in Mr. Gladstone's old age are the only



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parallel which presents itself; but there is this difference that the English statesman was not expected to entertain uninvited and often unknown guests. Once, it is recorded, no less than fifty were quartered on Monticello. Those who could not consult the oracle in person consulted him by letter. Thus early in 1818 a correspondent asked him for a plan of female education. Jefferson said it had never been with him "a subject of systematic contemplation." It had occupied his attention only in connection with the education of his own daughters, to whom he thought it essential to give "a solid education." He regretted the inordinate passion then prevalent for novels, and wished that the time lost in that sort of reading might be better employed. "When this poison infects the mind, it destroys its tone, and revolts it against wholesome reading. Reason and fact, plain and unadorned, are rejected. Nothing can engage attention unless dressed in all the figments of fancy, and nothing so bedecked comes amiss. The result is a bloated imagination, sickly judgment, and disgust towards all the real businesses of life." He excepted from the general mass of trashy fiction some of Marmontel's tales, the writings of Miss Edgeworth, and some of Madame Genlis. Among poets for the formation of style and taste he recommended Pope, Dryden, Thompson, Shakespeare, Molière, Racine, and Corneille. French he held to be indispensable for both sexes. His female curriculum included dancing, drawing, and music. Dancing is recommended as a healthy and attractive exercise; drawing was, he thought, neglected in America; every girl who had an ear for music should study it. As for household economy, one of Jefferson's remarks reminds us of Xenophon's delightful homily to his young wife: "The order and economy of a house are as honourable to a

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mistress as those of the farm to the master, and if either be neglected, ruin follows and children destitute of the means of living.”<sup>1</sup>

“My repugnance to the writing table becomes daily and hourly more deadly and insurmountable,” he wrote to Adams in May, 1818. In place of this has come on a canine appetite for reading. “And I indulge it, because I see in it a relief against the *taedium senectutis*; a lamp to lighten my path through the dreary wilderness of time before me, whose bourne I see not.” He complains of losing interest in the world around him; but his letters and the testimony of his family and friends are conclusive evidence against him. His musings carry him far and wide. He reviews the past, scans the present, and peers into the future. The South Americans were then revolting against Spain. They would succeed, said Jefferson; but their more dangerous enemies were the ignorance and superstition which would chain their minds and bodies under religious and military despotism. He hoped and believed they would obtain freedom by degrees. But who could say? “We shall only be lookers on from the clouds above, as now we look down on the labours, the hurry and bustle of the ants and bees.” Perhaps in that supermundane region they two, Adams and Jefferson, might have cause to smile over their own bad guesses at the future and over the nothingness of labours which had filled and agitated their lives.

Just before the end of the year he received with much satisfaction news that the soil of France had been liberated from occupation by the soldiers of the Allied powers. Her amended constitution, he thought, gave as much self-government to the people as they could bear until habits

<sup>1</sup> Jefferson to Nathaniel Burwell, March 14, 1818.

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of order had prepared them to receive more. At the same time he rejoiced that Congress was reducing the duties on French wine, for wine was the only antidote to the bane of whiskey. When wine was as cheap as grog, who would not prefer it? The poison of whiskey was desolating American homes. "No nation is drunken where wine is cheap; and none sober where the dear-ness of wine substitutes ardent spirits as the common beverage."

Early in January, 1819, a correspondent asked him for some political advice. Jefferson replied that he did not know the facts. The only sheet he took was Ritchie's, and of that he read chiefly the advertisements, as containing the only truths to be relied on in a newspaper! He professed far greater interest in the events of two or three thousand years ago than in current affairs. "I read nothing therefore but of the heroes of Troy, of the Wars of Lacedæmon and Athens, of Pompey and Cæsar, and of Augustus too, the Bonaparte and parricide scoundrel of that day." One contemporary mischief indeed he could not neglect "because it jostles me at every turn." It was paper money. "We have now no measure of value. I am asked \$18 for a yard of broadcloth, which when we had dollars I used to get for 18 shillings." Thus industry was bilked of its honest earnings for the benefit of "swindlers and shavers," who would close their careers by fraudulent bankruptcies.

A pamphlet on the pronunciation of Greek reminded Jefferson of two learned modern Greeks whom he had met at Paris. From them he had acquired the modern pronunciation, but only accepted it with limitations; for "sound being more fugitive than the written letter we must after such a lapse of time presume in it some degener-

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acies, as we see there are in the written words." He would have nothing to do with abandoning prosody: "against reading Greek by accent instead of quantity as Mr. Cicceicira [the author of the pamphlet] proposes I raise both my hands."

To a medico, who wanted to know how he preserved health and vigour, he gave about this time, March 21, 1819, an account of his diet and habits of life: —

"Like my friend the Doctor [Dr. Rush] I have lived temperately, eating little animal food, and that not as an aliment, so much as a condiment to the vegetables which constitute my principal diet. I double, however, the Doctor's glass and a half of wine, and even treble it with a friend; but halve its effect by drinking the weak wines only. The ardent wines I cannot drink, nor do I use ardent spirits in any form. Malt liquors and cider are my table drinks, and my breakfast, like that also of my friend, is of tea and coffee. I have been blest with organs of digestion which accept and concoct, without ever murmuring, whatever the palate chooses to consign to them, and I have not yet lost a tooth by age. I was a hard student until I entered on the business of life, the duties of which leave no idle time to those disposed to fulfil them; and now, retired, and at the age of seventy-six, I am again a hard student. Indeed, my fondness for reading and study revolts me from the drudgery of letter writing. And a stiff wrist, the consequence of an early dislocation, makes writing both slow and painful. I am not so regular in my sleep as the doctor says he was, devoting to it from five to eight hours, according as my company or the book I am reading interests me; and I never go to bed without an hour or half hour's previous reading of something moral, whereon to ruminate in the intervals of sleep. But whether I retire to bed early or late, I rise with the sun. I use spectacles at night, but not necessarily in the day, unless in reading small print. My hearing is distinct in particular conversation, but confused when several voices cross each other, which unfits me for the society of the table."

He ascribed his exemption from catarrhs "partly to the habit of bathing my feet in cold water every morning, for sixty years past." He was too feeble, he added,

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to walk much but rode "without fatigue six or eight miles a day, and sometimes thirty or forty."

During the summer of 1819 he indulged some of his inquisitors with historical recollections of the American Revolution, and took pains to assure a New Englander that he had no wish as a Virginian patriot "to intercept the just fame of Massachusetts or the promptitude and perseverance of her early resistance." Among her heroes he paid special praise to Samuel Adams, "truly a great man, wise in counsel, fertile in resources, immovable in his purposes." One of his letters at this time (August 24) contains an eloquent argument in favour of the classics, which might be called in aid against our modern barbarians. First, he said, the Greek and Latin languages are models of pure taste in writing; secondly, he put very high the luxury of reading the Greek and Roman authors in all the beauties of their originals, and thought himself more indebted to his father for having placed this luxury within his reach than for any of the other pleasures which he owed to his care and affection. Thirdly, he valued the stores of real science — of history, ethics, arithmetic, geometry, etc. deposited and transmitted to us in those languages. Then again the theologian finds in the Greek language his primary code, and the lawyer in Latin the system of civil law most conformable with the principles of justice. Even the physician must admit that his art had not much progressed since the days of Hippocrates. For the merchant, the agriculturist, and the mechanic he agreed that Latin and Greek were not necessary, but only an ornament and a comfort. They were however "a solid basis for most, and an ornament to all the sciences."

In September, which Jefferson spent at Poplar Forest, he read with approbation some pieces signed 'Hampden,'

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written by Judge Spencer Roane in criticism of John Marshall's judicial interpretations of the constitution. But he went a good deal beyond 'Hampden'; holding that each department, executive, legislature, and judiciary, was independent, and had an equal right to decide for itself what was the meaning of the constitution in the cases submitted to its action. By way of illustration he instanced his own action in releasing individuals imprisoned by the Federal courts under the Sedition Law, which he had treated as a law unauthorised by the constitution and therefore null. In the case of Marbury and Madison the Federal judges had declared that commissions signed and sealed by the President were valid though not delivered. "I deemed delivery essential to complete a deed . . . and I withheld delivery of the commissions."

Towards the close of the year, when the paper money bubble burst, with disastrous results to the community, Jefferson turned aside from classics, philosophy, and agriculture to formulate an ingenious plan for reducing the circulating medium and promoting the only sound remedy, that is to say a standard level of values which would coincide with the metallic medium and so be on a par with the money of Great Britain. But he was diverted from this inquiry to a much more alarming crisis which threatened to make an end to the Era of Good Feeling. On March 6, 1818, a petition had come to Congress praying that Missouri might be admitted to the Union. In the following February a Bill was introduced into the House of Representatives authorising the people of Missouri to form a state; whereupon an amendment was moved by Tallmadge, a New York member, to provide that no more slaves should be introduced into Missouri and that all children born within the new state should become free at

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the age of twenty-five. The debate on Tallmadge's amendment let loose a fierce controversy between north and south, between emancipation and slavery, and between those who preferred peace and Union to war and scission. It went on for two years, and was postponed rather than settled by the famous Missouri compromise in March, 1820, and by the admission of Missouri into the Union in March, 1821. It might have been supposed that the abolition of the foreign slave trade would have made the way easy for a general measure of emancipation, which would have fulfilled the hopes and carried out the earlier projects of Jefferson, Wythe, and other Virginian liberals in the early days of independence. Jefferson indeed was one of the few American statesmen who had endeavoured to provide a practical solution. In 1784 he was chairman of a Committee appointed by Congress to devise a plan of government for the Western territories above the parallel of 31 degrees N. Lat. embracing the territory which was afterwards converted into the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The Report drafted by Jefferson (March 1, 1784) provided that "after the year 1800 of the Christian era there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the said States." This admirable clause, which would have stopped the growth of the slave power and would almost certainly have obviated the Civil War, was lost by one vote. It is one of the tragedies of American history. As Jefferson himself wrote soon afterwards "the voice of a single individual . . . would have prevented this abominable crime from spreading itself over the new country. Thus we see the fate of millions unborn hanging on the tongue of one man, and Heaven was silent in that awful moment! But it is to be hoped it will not always be silent, and that the friends to

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the rights of human nature will in the end prevail." After this failure Jefferson had turned his attention to schemes for emancipating negroes and emigrating them to Sierra Leone, San Domingo, or one of the West Indian Islands. In 1805 he wrote to a friend to say that he had abandoned his hopes of any early provision for the extinction of domestic slavery; but after the foreign slave trade was prohibited in 1808, he thought that the diminishing value of slaves and sporadic insurrections in the South would gradually dispose the owners to abandon their human property. In this he was mistaken. Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793 soon made the cotton plantations of the South highly profitable, and almost all the cotton was cultivated by servile labour. Apart from domestic consumption the value of cotton exports had risen in 1820 to nearly twenty million dollars, and the average value of a negro slave was said to have trebled since the beginning of the century. Naturally, as the value of their slaves rose, the slave owners of the South became less and less inclined to surrender their property to the philanthropy of the north, which indeed at no time showed any disposition to provide equitable compensation after the example set by Great Britain in the West Indies. The furious tenacity with which the Southern Slave Power fought to establish the institution in Missouri astonished the people of the north. But it was a political question. The free states of the north were rapidly outpacing the slave states in wealth, power, and population. In 1790 the population and representation in Congress of the two groups had been about equal. The census of 1820 promised the north a preponderance of some thirty votes in the lower House, and the Southern politicians were therefore bent upon maintaining a political equilibrium in the



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Senate. Thus a struggle for more slave states was to them a struggle for political life. Here, as Carl Schurz points out,<sup>1</sup> lay the true significance of the Missouri Question. No debate on slavery, he wrote, had ever so stirred political passion : —

“The dissolution of the Union, Civil War, and streams of blood were freely threatened by Southern men, while some anti-slavery men declared themselves ready to accept all these calamities rather than the spread of slavery over the territories yet free from it. Neither was the excitement confined to the halls of Congress. As the reports of the speeches made there went over the land people were profoundly astonished and alarmed. The presence of a great danger, and a danger too springing from an inherent antagonism in the institutions of the country, suddenly flashed upon their minds.”

The Legislatures of Virginia and Kentucky and Maryland all pronounced for the admission of Missouri as a slave state. The Union was divided geographically on a deadly issue.

Jefferson took alarm in December, 1819. In April he began to point out to his friends the real danger. The old schism of Federal and Republican mattered comparatively little, because it existed in every state and in fact united the states by the fraternity of party; but the coincidence of a moral principle with a geographical line he feared would never be obliterated; the controversy thus stirred would recur again and again until it kindled “such mutual and mortal hatred as to render separation preferable to eternal discord.” As for the cession of slave property no man would be more ready than he for any practical sacrifice which would relieve the nation of this heavy reproach. But when the momentous question sounded “like a fire bell in the night,” it awakened and filled him with terror; for

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Henry Clay*, Chap. VIII.

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it seemed to him "the knell of the Union." The Compromise ceded slavery to Missouri, but provided that in all the rest of the country sold by France to the United States north of 36 degrees and thirty minutes (this being the southern boundary of Missouri) there should be no slavery. Jefferson saw in this compromise "a reprieve only, not a final sentence." Yet he thought the passage of slaves into Missouri would be no obstacle to emancipation, but would tend to facilitate its accomplishment by spreading the burden over a greater number of coadjutors. What he failed to see was that another extension of the domestic market might encourage the detestable industry of breeding slaves. The truth seems to be that a manifest danger to peace and to the Union overcoming all other considerations inclined him to palliate a lesser evil than war and procrastinate, in the hope that peaceful remedies would find favour. "We have the wolf by the ears," he wrote, "and we can neither hold him nor safely let him go. Justice in the one scale, and self preservation in the other." Who can blame the veteran statesman if at the close of his life he was unwilling to imperil his country's peace, his domestic happiness, his university, all that he loved and cared for, in order to cut off one small branch of the Upas Tree which all his life he had sought to eradicate by rational and pacific measures?

In the summer of 1820 his Portuguese friend, Correa, the eminent botanist, who was about to leave for Brazil, paid a farewell visit to Monticello. They had many conversations on the desirability of a cordial fraternisation among all the American nations, so that they might coalesce in an American system of policy totally independent of, and unconnected with, that of Europe. Recording these conversations to his friend William Short, August 4, Jef-

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erson predicted a day not far distant "when we may formally require a meridian of partition through the ocean which separates the two hemispheres, on the hither side of which no European gun shall ever be heard, nor an American on the other."

Seeing that the principles of society in the Old and New Worlds were radically different he would aim at an agreement with the maritime powers of Europe which would leave to them the task of suppressing piracy in their own seas, while the American nations would undertake it in theirs. I hope, he added, "no American patriot will ever lose sight of the essential policy of interdicting in the seas and territories of both Americas the ferocious and sanguinary contests of Europe."

He had invited Monroe to make Monticello his headquarters in the autumn for a meeting of the Board of Visitors which had been set up for the University. It is not clear whether Monroe actually stayed with him,<sup>1</sup> but towards the end of October Jefferson in the course of a letter to Correa on the prevalence of piracy in American waters wrote: "I had repeated conversations with the President on this subject while at his seat in this neighbourhood." We shall see how less than three years later Jefferson's inspiration was to find glorious fulfilment in the Monroe Doctrine, perhaps the most effective peace instrument of the nineteenth century.

All through 1820 and 1821 Jefferson was struggling hard for the University of Virginia in the teeth of persistent obstruction. Constitutional questions also claimed his attention. He denounced with just severity a mischievous law passed to vacate most of the executive offices of the

<sup>1</sup> One of the bedrooms at Monticello was called the Monroe room, another the Madison room.

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government every four years, a law which he saw would increase intrigue and corruption, and would prove even more baneful than the old attempt of the Federalists to make all office holders irremovable without the consent of the Senate. This new law (which transferred many appointments from the President to the Senate) would keep "all the hungry cormorants for office" in constant excitement, and would make placemen and place hunters alike sycophants to their senators. He thought the President must have signed the law without even reading it! Thus did Jefferson foresee and denounce beforehand that demoralising Spoils System which was to make the civil service of the United States for many years a byword for corruption and inefficiency. Here we have one of the fundamental differences between Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy.

Before the end of the year 1820 Jefferson's fears about the Missouri Question had calmed down, and he expressed confidence that the ship of state would ride safely over the Missouri wave as it had ridden over so many others. His last letter of the year was to William Roscoe of Liverpool. It shows that he was watching the gathering discontents and "the workings of hungry bellies" in the old country. But he was hopeful of reform and of a renewal of cordial relations between the two nations. That he cherished no enmities against Englishmen was shown by his plans for the University of Virginia. When the time comes to appoint professors, he said, "we shall apply for them chiefly to your island."

Early in the new year (1821) his grandson, Francis Eppes, asked the sage for his opinion of Lord Bolingbroke and Thomas Paine. Jefferson's reply shows how much, and why, he admired them both. Both he said were

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bitterly hated by the priests and Pharisees of their day. Both were honest men, both advocates for human liberty : —

“Paine wrote for a country which permitted him to push his reasoning to whatever length it would go ; Lord Bolingbroke in one restrained by a constitution and by public opinion. He was called indeed a Tory ; but his writings prove him a stronger advocate for liberty than any of his countrymen, the Whigs of the present day. Irritated by his exile he committed one act unworthy of him in connecting himself momentarily with a Prince rejected by his country. But he redeemed that single act by his establishment of the principles which proved it to be wrong.”

The verdict of history does not support Jefferson's good opinion of Bolingbroke ; but his comparison of Bolingbroke's style with Paine's is just to both writers : —

“No writer has exceeded Paine in ease and familiarity of style, in perspicuity of expression, happiness of elucidation, and in simple and unassuming language. In this he may be compared with Dr. Franklin ; and indeed his *Common Sense* was for a while believed to have been written by Dr. Franklin and published under the borrowed name of Paine, who had come over with him from England. Lord Bolingbroke's on the other hand is a style of the highest order — the lofty, rhythmical full flowing eloquence of Cicero ; periods of just measure, their members proportioned, their close full and round. His conceptions too are bold and strong, his diction copious, polished, and commanding as his subject. His writings are certainly the finest samples in the English language of the eloquence proper for the senate.”

The most timid religionist, he added, with a touch of irony, would find Bolingbroke's political tracts safe reading ; his philosophical ones were suited only “to those who are not afraid to trust their reasoning with discussions of right and wrong.” After writing thus freely in praise of the two most execrated writers of that age he appended a caution, lest his grandson should allow these remarks to find their way into the newspapers, and so raise up against

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him an army of new enemies. It was a critical moment for the University of Virginia, and Jefferson had begun to fear that he would not live to see it opened. He must be careful not to give further provocation to the Presbyterians. Even if all the money he hoped for became available (so he wrote to Cabell, January 31, 1821), they would be able to afford no more than six professors, while Harvard would still "prime it over us with her twenty." But gloomy as the prospects were, when some of the best friends of the institution were deserting it, the old man declared that he would die in the last ditch rather than abandon his effort to bestow this "immortal boon" on his country. After all, he said, "the exertions and the mortifications are temporary, the benefits eternal."

At this time Sully, the portrait painter, was asked by the military academy of West Point to execute a portrait of Jefferson. Jefferson was ready to entertain the artist, but added that so fine a pencil would be ill employed "on an ottamy<sup>1</sup> of seventy-eight," and quoted Voltaire's reply to a similar request that he should sit to a sculptor. A letter from his ancient enemy, Timothy Pickering, enclosing one of Dr. Channing's discourses evidently gave Jefferson a good deal of pleasure. Pickering seems for a moment to have forgotten their political differences in religious agreement; for Jefferson's reply indulges in his favourite hope that reason was progressing towards rational Christianity, and that "the incomprehensible jargon of the Trinitarian arithmetic" would soon be done away with. There is no doubt that at this time Unitarian doctrines were making many converts in the United States; but Jefferson — who, like most of us, was apt to think what he hoped — went far from the mark when he predicted to Pickering: "I

<sup>1</sup> Atomy or otomy was sometimes used a century ago for a walking skeleton.

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have little doubt that the whole of our country will soon be rallied to the unity of the Creator."

In the autumn Jefferson and Adams exchanged views on the probability of progress, and the possibility that civilisation might slip back again into barbarism. Jefferson admitted that things looked bad in Naples, Piedmont, Spain, and Portugal; and he feared that the poor Greeks might only exchange the tyranny of the Sultan for the tyranny of the Czar. "Yet I will not believe our labours lost. I shall not die without a hope that light and liberty are on steady advance." Once indeed the light had been eclipsed for centuries by barbarism; but should the same northern hordes again swarm in upon civilisation "the art of printing alone, and the vast dissemination of books, will maintain the mind where it is, and raise the conquering ruffians to the level of the conquered, instead of degrading these to that of their conquerors." And even should barbarism and despotism again obscure the science and liberties of Europe, the United States would remain to preserve light and freedom and restore them to the old world.

Congress, it appears, did not put quite so high a value on books and learning; for Jefferson was at this time exerting himself to procure the repeal of a customs duty which had been imposed on imported books. In a circular letter, to the Universities and colleges of the United States, he explained that the duties on imported books were fifteen per cent, "which by ordinary customs-house charges amount to about eighteen per cent and, adding the importing bookseller's profit on this, become about 27 per cent." The object of the duty was to encourage the home manufacture of books, and also (apparently) to make piratical reprints of English authors

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profitable. But for poor scholars who wanted good modern editions of the classics the duty was not protective but prohibitive. He hoped that Congress might be converted to free trade in books, seeing that science is more important in a republic than in any other government, and that "to prohibit us from the benefit of foreign light is to consign us to long darkness."

In June he heard of another war in Europe, this time between Russia and Turkey. He hoped the United States would prove "how much happier for man the Quaker policy is," and how much better is the life of the feeder than that of the fighter. "Let us milk the cow, while the Russian holds her by the horns, and the Turk by the tail." He was enjoying the temperature of summer, and wished it were possible to sleep through winter like a dormouse. He could walk as far as his garden, but with sensible fatigue. "I ride however daily; but reading is my delight. I should wish never to put pen to paper; and the more because of the treacherous practice some people have of publishing one's letters without leave."

In the autumn he discussed meteorology with one correspondent, communism with another, and religious fanaticism with a third. Few men of that day had done more to advance meteorology than Jefferson, but he confessed that no science had advanced less in the last hundred years. He was still an empiric, suffering his faith to go no further than his facts. The phenomena of snow, halo, aurora borealis, haze, looming, etc. were still but imperfectly understood, and electricity remained where Dr. Franklin's discoveries had left it "except with its new modification of galvinism."

A pamphlet on communistic commonwealths provoked mixed feelings. Jefferson could conceive that small soci-



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eties might exist happily on the principle of a communion of property; but he did not feel that a nation could be so governed, and looked to education and the spread of enlightenment as the most reliable resource for ameliorating the condition of mankind.

That winter O'Meara's *Bonaparte* arrived. After reading it Jefferson sent his impressions to Adams. It raised his opinion of Napoleon's understanding. Hitherto he had thought him "the greatest of all military captains but an indifferent statesman, and misled by unworthy passions." But flashes in his conversations with O'Meara "prove a mind of great expansion although not of distinct development and reasoning." The book, he added, "makes us forget his atrocities for a moment in commiseration of his sufferings." But it also showed that nature had denied Napoleon the moral sense; and there was no safety to nations while he was permitted to roam at large. On the principle of self-preservation therefore it was right to confine him for life as a lion or tiger.

In 1822 Judge William Johnson of Charleston had published his excellent *Life and Correspondence of General Nathanael Greene*. A few months later the unhappy author, writhing under the lash of the *North American Review*, wrote to Jefferson, who replied (March 4, 1823) with words of consolation and encouragement. He did not take the *North American Review*; "consequently I have never seen its observations on your inestimable history."

"But a reviewer can never let a work pass uncensored. He must always make himself wiser than his author. . . . On this occasion he seems to have had more sensibility for Virginia than she has for herself; for on reading the work I saw nothing to touch our pride or jealousy, but every expression of respect and good will which truth could

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justify. The family of enemies whose buzz you apprehend are now nothing. . . . Do not therefore fear these insects. . . . Let me then implore you, dear Sir, to finish your history of parties. . . . We have been too careless of our future reputation, while our Tories will omit nothing to place us in the wrong. Besides the five volumed libel<sup>1</sup> which represents us as struggling for office, and not at all to prevent our government from being administered into a monarchy, the life of Hamilton is in the hands of a man who, to the bitterness of the priest adds the rancour of the fiercest Federalism.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Adams's papers too and his biography will descend of course to his son, whose pen you know is pointed, and his prejudices not in our favour. And doubtless other things are in preparation unknown to us. On our part we are depending on truth to make itself known, while history is taking a contrary set which may become too inveterate for correction."

Madison, he added, would leave something, but chiefly on the early history of the constitution : —

"After he joined me in the Administration he had no leisure to write. This too was my case. But although I had not time to prepare anything express, my letters (all preserved) will furnish the daily occurrences and views from my return from Europe in 1790 till I retired finally from office. These will command more conviction than anything I could have written after my retirement, no day having ever passed during that period without a letter to somebody; written too in the moment and in the warmth and freshness of fact and feeling they will carry internal evidence that what they breathe is genuine. . . . But multiplied testimony, multiplied views, will be necessary to give solid establishment to truth. Much is known to one which is not known to another, and no one knows everything. It is the sum of individual knowledge which is to make up the whole truth and to give its correct current through future time."

He hoped therefore that Johnson would not withhold his stock of information. Some weeks later in reply to questions from the Judge he sent him another long and valuable letter to show that the Republican party was an

<sup>1</sup> John Marshall's *Life of Washington*.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. John M. Mason, who however abandoned the task.

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opposition party on principle, not merely seeking for office. In this letter he reverted to his old view that the Missouri question "is not dead, it only sleepeth. The Indian Chief said he did not go to war for every petty injury by itself, but put it into his pouch, and when that was full he then made war."

If Jefferson was unwilling to risk a civil war for the sake of taking a small step in the direction of abolishing domestic slavery, neither was he prepared to risk foreign war for the sake of emancipating or assisting in the emancipation of the insurgent Spanish colonies in America. President Monroe was being pressed to play the Republican Don Quixote; but before coming to a decision he went to consult the oracle of Monticello at the beginning of summer. As luck would have it Jefferson was away in his other home at Poplar Forest, Bedford; and consequently a letter which informs posterity as well took the place of a conversation which would only have informed the President. The letter admits and betrays (as we shall see) a lack of sufficient information about the currents and cross currents of European diplomacy; but the reasoning is vigorous and the purpose clear. It begins:—

### TO THE PRESIDENT

Monticello, June 11, 1823.

DEAR SIR,

Considering that I had not been to Bedford for a twelvemonth before, I thought myself singularly unfortunate in so timing my journey, as to have been absent exactly at the moment of your late visit to our neighbourhood. The loss, indeed, was all my own; for in these short interviews with you I generally get my political compass rectified, learn from you whereabouts we are, and correct my course again. In exchange for this, I can give you but newspaper ideas, and little indeed of these, for I read but a single paper, and that hastily. I find Horace

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and Tacitus so much better writers than the champions of the gazettes, that I lay those down to take up these with great reluctance. And on the question you propose, whether we can, in any form, take a bolder attitude than formerly in favour of liberty, I can give you but commonplace ideas. They will be but the widow's mite, and offered only because requested. The matter which now embroils Europe, the presumption of dictating to an independent nation the form of its government, is so arrogant, so atrocious, that indignation, as well as moral sentiment, enlists all our partialities and prayers in favour of one, and our equal execrations against the other. I do not know, indeed, whether all nations do not owe to one another a bold and open declaration of their sympathies with the one party, and their detestation of the conduct of the other. But farther than this we are not bound to go; and indeed, for the sake of the world, we ought not to increase the jealousies, or draw on ourselves the power of this formidable confederacy.

I have ever deemed it fundamental for the United States never to take active part in the quarrels of Europe. Their political interests are entirely distinct from ours. Their mutual jealousies, their balance of power, their complicated alliances, their forms and principles of government, are all foreign to us. They are nations of eternal war. All their energies are expended in the destruction of the labour, property, and lives of their people. On our part, never had a people so favourable a chance of trying the opposite system, of peace and fraternity with mankind, and the direction of all our means and faculties to the purposes of improvement instead of destruction. With Europe we have few occasions of collision, and these, with a little prudence and forbearance, may be generally accommodated. Of the brethren of our own hemisphere, none are yet, or for an age to come will be, in a shape, condition, or disposition to war against us. And the foothold which the nations of Europe had in either America, is slipping from under them, so that we shall soon be rid of their neighbourhood. Cuba alone seems at present to hold up a speck of war to us. Its possession by Great Britain would, indeed, be a great calamity to us. Could we induce her to join us in guarantying its independence against all the world, *except Spain*, it would be nearly as valuable to us as if it were our own. But should she take it, I would not immediately go to war for it; because the first war on other accounts will give it to us; or the island will give itself to us, when able to do so. While no duty, therefore, calls on us to take part in the present war of Europe, and a golden

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harvest offers itself in reward for doing nothing, peace and neutrality seem to be our duty and interest."

From this point, misled by his lifelong experience of the tortuous insincerities of British and European diplomacy, he attempts a reconstruction of the real objects which he supposed to underlie Canning's diplomatic correspondence. The British aristocracy, he thought, fearing a popular revolution, must have made a secret contract with the Continental monarchies for military aid "should insurrection take place among her people." On this theory Britain must be playing false both with Spain and her revolted Colonies. Her diplomats therefore had fabricated "double papers," and talked of morals and principles to gull their own people, as if qualms of conscience would not permit them to go all lengths with their Holy Allies. "A fraudulent neutrality, if neutrality at all, is all that Spain will get from her." Here he breaks off: "I am going beyond my text and sinning against the adage of carrying coals to Newcastle. In hazarding to you my crude and uninformed notions of things beyond my cognizance only be so good as to remember that it is at your request." He was confident that the President would do what was right, leaving Europe to act its follies and crimes "while we pursue in good faith the paths of peace and prosperity."

Jefferson was mistaken in his suspicions of British diplomacy. In the Tory government of unreformed England Castlereagh had been succeeded at the Foreign Office by Canning; and Canning, though he remained a Tory at home, a stalwart supporter of Old Sarum, was developing a liberal foreign policy favourable to the liberties of other nations. In 1818, when the Czar proposed that a Holy Alliance of European monarchs should aid Spain in suppressing republican principles in South America, Castle-

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reagh had merely replied that it was an enterprise in which England would not participate; but on becoming Foreign Secretary in September, 1822, Canning speedily took steps towards recognising the independence of the Spanish colonies in America, and by the autumn of 1823 Monroe had unqualified proofs that British foreign policy was in conformity with republican aspirations. Canning was acting in the spirit of his splendid if slightly bombastical declaration: "I called the New World into existence in order to redress the balance of the Old," — a British Columbus and a British George Washington rolled into one! On receiving evidence of England's sincerity President Monroe forwarded the papers to Monticello and asked for Jefferson's opinion. The text of the reply cannot be omitted; for it is the last important document in Jefferson's career as an American statesman, and it marks the culminating success of his foreign policy in that Grand Design which took shape shortly afterwards in the Monroe Doctrine: —

### TO THE PRESIDENT

Monticello, October 24, 1823.

DEAR SIR,

The question presented by the letters you have sent me, is the most momentous which has ever been offered to my contemplation since that of Independence. That made us a nation, this sets our compass, and points the course which we are to steer through the ocean of time opening on us. And never could we embark on it under circumstances more auspicious. Our first and fundamental maxim should be, never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. Our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs. America, North and South, has a set of interests distinct from those of Europe, and peculiarly her own. She should therefore have a system of her own, separate and apart from that of Europe. While the last is labouring to become the domicile of despotism, our endeavour should surely be, to make our hemisphere that of freedom. One nation, most of all, could disturb us

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in this pursuit; she now offers to lead, aid, and accompany us in it. By acceding to her proposition, we detach her from the band of despots, bring her mighty weight into the scale of free government, and emancipate a continent at one stroke, which might otherwise linger long in doubt and difficulty. Great Britain is the nation which can do us the most harm of any one, or all on earth; and with her on our side we need not fear the whole world. With her then, we should most sedulously cherish a cordial friendship; and nothing would tend more to knit our affections than to be fighting once more, side by side, in the same cause. Not that I would purchase even her amity at the price of taking part in her wars. But the war in which the present proposition might engage us, should that be its consequence, is not her war, but ours. Its object is to introduce and establish the American system of keeping out of our land all foreign powers, of never permitting those of Europe to intermeddle with the affairs of our nations. It is to maintain our own principle, not to depart from it. And if, to facilitate this, we can effect a division in the body of the European powers, and draw over to our side its most powerful member, surely we should do it. But I am clearly of Mr. Canning's opinion, that it will prevent instead of provoking war. With Great Britain withdrawn from their scale, and shifted into that of our two continents, all Europe combined would not undertake such a war. For how would they propose to get at either enemy without superior fleets? Nor is the occasion to be slighted which this proposition offers, of declaring our protest against the atrocious violations or the rights of nations, by the interference of any one in the internal affairs of another, so flagitiously begun by Buonaparte, and now continued by the equally lawless Alliance, calling itself Holy.

But we have first to ask ourselves a question. Do we wish to acquire to our own confederacy any one or more of the Spanish provinces? I candidly confess, that I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States. The control which, with Florida Point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the countries and isthmus bordering on it, as well as all those whose waters flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-being. Yet, as I am sensible that this can never be obtained, even with her own consent, but by war — and its independence, which is our second interest, (and especially its independence of England) can be secured without it, I have no hesitation in abandoning my first wish to future chances, and accepting its independence, with

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peace and the friendship of England, rather than its association at the expense of war and her enmity.

I could honestly, therefore, join in the declaration proposed, that we aim not at the acquisition of any of those possessions, that we will not stand in the way of any amicable arrangement between them and the mother country; but that we will oppose, with all our means, the forcible interposition of any other power, as auxiliary, stipendiary, of under any other form or pretext, and most especially, their transfer to any power by conquest, cession, or acquisition in any other way. I should think it, therefore, advisable, that the Executive should encourage the British government to a continuance in the dispositions expressed in these letters, by an assurance of his concurrence with them as far as his authority goes; and that as it may lead to war, the declaration of which requires an act of Congress, the case shall be laid before them for consideration at their first meeting, and under the reasonable aspect in which it is seen by himself.

I have been so long weaned from political subjects, and have so long ceased to take any interest in them, that I am sensible I am not qualified to offer opinions on them worthy of any attention. But the question now proposed involves consequences so lasting, and effects so decisive of our future destinies, as to rekindle all the interest I have heretofore felt on such occasions, and to induce me to the hazard of opinions, which will prove only my wish to contribute still my mite towards any thing which may be useful to our country. And praying you to accept it at only what it is worth, I add the assurance of my constant and affectionate friendship and respect.

TH. JEFFERSON.

A few weeks later, December 2, 1823, the President gave to the world in a message to Congress the famous announcement that the United States would consider any attempt on the part of European powers "to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." But the message belongs to American history. Enough for us that it was prompted by Jefferson, infused with his spirit, drafted and enounced by his political pupil and disciple, the last of the noble line of Virginian Dynasts.



## CHAPTER IV

### JEFFERSON FOUNDS THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."

— Motto of the University of Virginia

Of all the monuments left by Jefferson none is so truly characteristic as the University of Virginia. Every brick, every pillar, and cupola tells of the architect and master builder. Until you have seen it and Monticello you have not known Jefferson. Its origin has been contrasted with that of the foundations which preceded it in America. William and Mary, famous for its early alumni, was a royal college which failed to move with the times. It lost ground when the capital was removed to Richmond. Its growth was stunted by restrictive Trusts. Its reputation dwindled when its great law teacher, George Wythe, departed. Other early American Universities like Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Princeton "began as mere schools for humble colonies with no prevision of the great destinies which awaited them. But the University of Virginia sprang into life in full panoply from the conception of a single man, like Minerva from the brain of Jove." Jefferson was more than founder, more even than 'father' of the University, though that was one of the three titles to fame which he chose to have inscribed on his tomb. He was founder, father, architect, and law-giver. He chose the site, made the plans, supervised their execution, chose the first pro-

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fessors, had the happiness to see his buildings filled with students, and to act as their first rector. But for him the University had never been. He collected money, inspired its supporters in the Virginia Assembly with his own enthusiasm, and made it a great Virginian institution. All this was done after he had passed the allotted span of life — an achievement for which it would be hard to find a parallel. It was part of a general scheme to give his native state a worthy system of education — a scheme long cherished, which goes back to his first effort in 1776. When peace at last came to Europe and America, Jefferson saw his opportunity. In 1815 he wrote to his friend, Joseph C. Cabell, a Member of the Virginia Assembly, who proved to be an able and devoted servant in the cause of education, to tell him that J. B. Say, the celebrated French economist, was thinking of leaving France for America, and settling in the neighbourhood of Monticello. Might they not attract such men and convert the languishing Albemarle Academy, with the help of additional funds, into "the best seminary of the United States"? He mentions various financial resources, and adds: "In addition to this if you could obtain a loan for four or five years only of seven thousand to eight thousand dollars, I think I have it now in my power to obtain three of the ablest characters in the world to fill the higher professorships. . . . — three such characters as are not in a single University of Europe."

Some modern benefactors of American Universities seem to suppose that buildings are all important. Jefferson, in spite of his passion for architecture, knew that the life and use of a University depends on the character and talents of the teachers, and not upon the quality or quantity of the buildings. His first step

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was to sketch out a comprehensive plan of education and to call forth from the legislature of his native state a liberal spirit in the endowment of public instruction which would place it on a level with New England. The scheme which he and his friends adopted took shape in a report recommending that for educational purposes Virginia should be divided into townships and districts. In each township a primary school should be established and in each district an academy; the system to be crowned by a state university with nine professorships. In accordance with these recommendations the House of Delegates passed a Bill; but the Senate insisted on referring it to public opinion, and the two Houses ordered that the Report, the Bill, Jefferson's Bill of 1776, and a letter he had written expounding his views should be printed and distributed through the Commonwealth. Much discussion followed, and Jefferson was asked to prepare further bills for establishing a system of public education. In a letter enclosing one of these bills to Cabell he made an ironical apology for having written it in intelligible English: —

"I dislike the verbose and intricate style of the modern English statutes, and in our revised code I endeavoured to restore it to the simple one of the ancient statutes in such original bills as I drew in that work. I suppose the reformation has not been acceptable, as it has been little followed. You however can easily correct this bill to the taste of my brother lawyers, by making every other word a 'said' or 'aforesaid,' and saying everything over two or three times, so as that nobody but we of the craft can untwist the diction and find out what it means."

He was working heart and soul on these legislative projects, far more interested in them than in his own financial troubles. "I have only this single anxiety in this

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world," he wrote, of a bill then before the legislature:—"it is a bantling of forty years' growth and nursing, and if I can once see it on its legs I will sing with sincerity and pleasure my nunc dimittis."

In 1818 to the same correspondent he said: "A system of general instruction, which shall reach every description of our citizens from the highest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so it will be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest." In that year there assembled in an unpretending tavern at Rockfish Gap in the Blue Ridge a gathering of Virginians to confer on questions of public education. There were present, besides many leading public men, President Monroe and his predecessor in office. But it was remarked, says Tucker, by the lookers on that Mr. Jefferson was the principal object of regard, that he seemed to be the chief mover of the body—the soul that animated it; "and some who were present, struck by these manifestations of deference, conceived a more exalted idea of him on this simple occasion than they had ever previously entertained." Jefferson was unanimously chosen to preside, and the meeting concurred with him in recommending Charlottesville as the most suitable site for the University. The choice was sanctioned by the Legislature, and \$44,000 were subscribed in Albemarle and the neighbouring counties, chiefly by Jefferson's influence and example. Jefferson and nine others subscribed \$1,000 apiece, and this money along with other funds was transferred in 1819 to the Visitors of the University. It was a proud day for Albemarle and Charlottesville when the corner stone of the University was laid. But it had cost Jefferson, as Parton reminds us, much tactful diplomacy to get it laid "just there within sight of his own

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abode." Other localities had their champions. If a commissioner objected that a more salubrious site might be found, Jefferson would draw from his pocket a list of persons aged over eighty living in the neighbourhood of Charlottesville. When others suggested a more central location, Jefferson cut a card in the shape of Virginia on which *his* site was shown by a dot. By balancing the card on the point of a pencil he proved that the dot was nearly at the centre of the State. But the geographical centre might not be the centre of population. To meet this objection Jefferson presented a wooden map of Virginia on which he had inscribed in his own hand the population of all the counties, to provide ocular demonstration that, if the population of Virginia had to revolve, Charlottesville would be the pivot. So "the corner stone was laid where the Master of Monticello could watch its rising glories from his portico, and ride over every day to the site five miles distant."<sup>1</sup>

From the spring of 1819 until 1824, Jefferson spent a great part of his time in superintending the building of his University. It was time well spent. Those who have compared Monticello with other private houses of the same date, and the University of Virginia with contemporary public buildings in Europe and America will not dispute that Jefferson was one of the finest architects of the day. He designed not only the general plan, but all the subordinate parts, and made almost daily visits to see that the bricklayers, plasterers, and stone cutters, mostly from Philadelphia, executed the work to his satisfaction. It was a ten-mile ride to the University and back. When he could not undertake the journey he used to watch the work from the northeast corner of his terrace at Monti-

<sup>1</sup> See Parton's *Life of Jefferson*, Chap. 70. It is from the terrace, not from the portico, that one can see the University Buildings.

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cello through a telescope, which is still preserved in the Library of the University.

The University was built on three sides of a square "lawn," as the Campus is called. On one side is the Rotunda, on the other two the professors' houses called Pavilions. Between the Pavilions are the students' rooms, one storey high, with colonnades. The ten Pavilions display different styles of classical architecture, with a variety very pleasing to the eye. Most of the capitals and columns were executed in Italy. As the work progressed, Jefferson loved to conduct visitors over the detailed beauties of his rising fabric. Each Pavilion was adorned with its appropriate portico, and Jefferson — as cicerone — would pause before these models to show his admiring countrymen how faithfully they presented the true features of Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian.<sup>1</sup> On these embellishments, says Tucker, probably more money was spent than on those parts which were indispensable. As usual in such cases the estimates were constantly exceeded; and but for Jefferson's persuasive eloquence and influence over the Legislature, which obtained from time to time further grants in aid, the work must have been brought to a standstill. "His knowledge of the springs of human action, and his address in putting them into operation, were never more conspicuous"; but on the same authority we are told that his skilful advocacy would have been unavailing but for the marvellous patience and perseverance of which his correspondence with Cabell, filling a portly volume, and innumerable letters to other correspondents provide ample testimony.

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Randolph, in those charming and often pathetic reminiscences of her great-grandfather, speaks of the University "whose classic dome and columns are now [1871] lit up by the rays of the same sun which shines on the ruin and desolation of his own once happy home."

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Though Jefferson spent much on decoration and finish, he was a thrifty and economical builder. To save bricks he built serpentine walls, which are among the curiosities of the University.

To the modern benefactor, who thinks nothing of giving a million dollars for the enlargement of a University, the hundred and sixty-two thousand dollars, at which Jefferson in 1820 computed the cost of the whole when completed, will not appear extravagant. Indeed our wonder is that a design so graceful in its variety and harmony could have been executed for so small a sum. An Oxford or a Cambridge man may find it difficult to share Jefferson's decided preference for classical over Gothic structures; but, however that may be, the University of Virginia must be pronounced, not only one of the choicest examples of academic architecture in the United States, but unique among them all.

Everything done and proposed required the sanction of the Board of Visitors, which was chosen in February, 1819. It consisted of Jefferson, Madison, Cabell, and four others. They almost invariably deferred to Jefferson's views; partly no doubt for the reason often urged by Madison that, as the scheme was his and as the chief responsibility for its success or failure would fall on him, it was but fair to let him execute it in his own way. At their first meeting in March, 1819, Jefferson was appointed Rector. In September, 1823, he was able to write to William Short:—

"By that time our rotunda (the walls of which will be finished this month) will have received its roof, and will show itself externally to some advantage. Its columns only will be wanting, as they must await their capitals from Italy. We have just received from thence, and are now putting up, the marble capitals of the buildings we have already erected,

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which completes our whole system, except the rotunda and its adjacent gymnasia. All are now ready to receive their occupants, and should the legislature, at their next session, liberate our funds as is hoped, we shall ask but one year more to procure our professors, for most of whom we must go to Europe."

To get European professors they despatched F. W. Gilmer to England, and Jefferson wrote to Samuel Parr and Dugald Stewart to ask for their aid in the task of selection. When it came to the appointment of professors a hue and cry was raised by the orthodox because the Board of Visitors decided to appoint a learned friend of Priestley's, Dr. Cooper, who had been a victim of the Sedition Law and was reputed to be a Unitarian.<sup>1</sup> A storm was raised in the legislature, and Jefferson's letters do full justice to the situation. He laid about him vigorously, accusing the clergy and especially the Presbyterians of trying to restore the Holy Inquisition. In the end he gave way rather than imperil public support; but the Visitors stuck to their principle of getting the best men available without regard to patriotism or nepotism. The first professors, according to George Tucker, all belonged to the Episcopal church "except Dr. Blaettermann who I believe was a German Lutheran; but I think there was no one except Mr. Lomax, the professor of Law, and now a judge, who was a communicant. I don't remember that I ever heard the religious creeds of either professors or visitors discussed or inquired into by Mr. Jefferson or any one else." This quotation is from a letter written in 1856 by Jefferson's first biographer, the only Virginian among the first professors, in response to an inquiry from Randall. Several came from England, including George Long, the well-known classical scholar, and Thomas Key, who

<sup>1</sup> He was to fill two chairs — Chemistry and Law, an unusual combination.



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both afterwards returned to appointments in London. Another Englishman was Dr. Dunglison who became Jefferson's physician. Jefferson was much criticised also because there was no professorship of divinity. But this, as he remarked in his Annual Report for 1822, was in conformity with the principles of the Virginian constitution which placed all sects and religion on an equal footing, and relied upon their jealousies to guard that equality from encroachment or surprise. Provision however was made for giving instruction in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, "the depositories of the originals and of the earliest and most respected authorities of the faith of every sect, and for courses of ethical lectures developing those moral obligations in which all sects agree." Although the establishment of a particular form of religion within the University was barred, they proposed, he said, to allow any sectarian school of Divinity to establish itself on the confines of the University, so that its students might have ready and convenient access to University lectures. It was observed many years afterwards that if the offer thus made on very liberal terms to the various sects had been accepted, "the University of Virginia would now comprise the most extensive school of theology in the world."

Besides being released from sectarian bigotry students of the new University enjoyed another unusual privilege. Its first Rector, as Dr. Edwin Alderman has remarked, "believed in free choice of a career in educational achievement; and in the University gave the opportunity of election." Jefferson told George Ticknor that they would certainly vary the Harvard practice of holding all the students to one prescribed course of reading. "We shall on the contrary allow them uncontrolled choice in the lectures they shall choose to attend, and require elemen-

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tary qualification only and sufficient age." The question what qualification should be required for the admission of students to a University is a problem admitting of no single solution; for it must depend largely upon the curriculum in the schools of the district from which a University draws most of its undergraduates. But if the object of a University is to liberalise the minds of its students, to enlarge their views, and to give them all some share, however small, in the great human heritages of art, literature, and philosophy, they will not be permitted to embark on a technical course in a state of barbarous ignorance extending even to the grammar of their own language and to the elements of their own history.

Through the kindness of the authorities I was allowed, when I visited Charlottesville, to examine the famous Minutes of the Board of Visitors written out in Jefferson's own hand and usually signed also by Madison and Monroe. By good fortune I found in them Jefferson's own answer to the question here raised. On October 4, 1824, the Rector wrote:—

"No diploma shall be given to anyone who has not passed such an examination of the Latin language as shall have proved him able to read the highest classics in that language with ease, thorough understanding, and just quantity; and if he be also a proficient in the Greek let that too be stated in his diploma; the intention being that the reputation of the University shall not be committed but to those who, to an eminence in some one or more of the sciences taught in it, add a proficiency in these languages which constitute the basis of good education and are indispensable to fill up the character of a 'well educated man.'"

There may seem to some to be a tinge of old world conservatism in the value which Jefferson here sets on the classics, and in his view that a high standard of Latin

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should be insisted upon even for scientists who are to obtain academic honours. Being himself proficient in Latin and Greek as well as French and Italian, and being besides one of the foremost among American men of science, a mathematician to boot, a botanist, with considerable skill in zoology and anthropology, he may perhaps have been inclined to set up rather too high a standard for the average University student. Indeed it may be doubted whether all the professors whom he chose could have read Cicero and Tacitus with ease, or Lucretius and Horace with thorough understanding and just quantity. But in an age when elegance and even grammar do not always mark academic writings we shall not hastily condemn Jefferson for prizing scholarship. Words are the fortresses of thought. Slovenly and inaccurate writing is no friend of truth or science. It may be conceded that some great masters of our language have known neither Latin nor Greek; but they are the exceptions for whom it is unwise to legislate.

One other question may be asked. Was Jefferson right in his very high estimate of the value of a public system of education and of a State University? Is not self-education the only true form of education, and do school masters and professors promote it? Is political wisdom teachable, and can it be taught by those who don't possess it? Above all has the wonderful extension of free popular education in the United States and elsewhere during the last century fulfilled the hopes of Jefferson and others who founded their faith in representative government on the instructed intelligence of the common people? It is right to put these questions here; but it would be wrong to attempt an answer. Enough that, in spite of manifold disappointments, an overwhelming body of opinion sup-

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ports Jefferson's judgment, that in order to ensure liberty, justice, peace, and good government you must first dispel ignorance and equalise opportunity. And how can you do this unless you place your children's feet on the ladder by which, if they have the capacity, they can mount from an elementary school to a university?

## CHAPTER V

### THE CURTAIN FALLS

1824-1826

"Ev'n in his ashes live their wonted fires." — GRAY.

WHILE President Monroe was excogitating the Monroe Doctrine, the topic of every conversation, so wrote Jefferson to La Fayette, was "who is to be the next president"? The question, he predicted, would ultimately be reduced to the northernmost and southernmost candidate, meaning John Quincy Adams and Crawford of Georgia. But when the electoral votes were counted, Andrew Jackson, of Tennessee, the hero of New Orleans, stood at the head of the poll, with John Quincy Adams a good second, followed by Crawford and Clay. As no candidate had a clear majority, the election devolved on the House of Representatives, and Adams was chosen President. The very name of Federalism, as Jefferson said, had been 'prostrated' by the Hartford Convention, the victory of Orleans, and the peace of Ghent. Many of its votaries 'in shame and mortification' now called themselves Republicans. But the name only was changed. "The sickly, weakly, timid man fears the people, and is a Tory by nature." Such a one would still aim at strengthening the central government and encroaching on state rights. But Jefferson's correspondence in these last years, from 1824 to 1826, reveals no excitement about the presidency, or the doings at Washington. Not that his public spirit was impaired, though his natural

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force was abated. Most of his remaining energy was devoted to the University, the completion of the buildings, the choice of the professors, the admission of students, and the rules which as Rector it was his duty to frame for the guidance of the Institution.

Jefferson's interest in the larger problems of public policy remained; but the cares of government were no longer his; and he wrote to Edward Livingston on April 4, 1824: "I resign myself cheerfully to the managers of the ship, and the more contentedly as I am near the end of my voyage. I have learned to be less confident in the conclusions of human reason and give more credit to the honesty of contrary opinions." The real friends of the Federal constitution — he observed to another — "if they wish it to be immortal, should be attentive by amendments to make it keep pace with the advance of the age in science and experience." No great statesman of modern times has more thoroughly imbibed the Baconian motto *antiquitas seculi juvenus mundi* — that least translatable of Latin apothegms. All his old liberal prepossessions remained in full force, though their expression might be mellowed by time and judgment. He was still the oracle whom all consulted. Among his responses is one to the President of a Jefferson debating society, commending Sallust and Tacitus as models of sententious brevity, and warning young debaters against amplification — the vice of modern oratory. "It is an insult to an assembly of reasonable men, disgusting and revolting, instead of persuading. Speeches measured by the hour die with the hour."

He found time in the summer of 1824 to write a long letter to Major Cartwright, the veteran reformer, whose volume on the English constitution had delighted Jeffer-

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son by "tracing it from its rightful root, the Anglo Saxon." If Jefferson had been an ardent young English radical, he could not have denounced with more fervour than in this letter to Cartwright the usurpations of the Norman, Tudor, and Stuart kings, or the villainy of Hume's Tory history, or the shocking error of those English judges who had sought to establish religious orthodoxy by making it part and parcel of the common law.

About the same time Martin Van Buren, a rising wire-puller, who was afterwards to attain the presidency, sent him an elaborate Philippic by Timothy Pickering, who had returned to the political arena armed with poisoned darts for Adams, Jefferson, and others who had crossed his path. "I could not have believed," wrote the Sage of Monticello, "that for so many years, and to such a period of advanced age, he could have nourished passions so vehement and viperous. It appears that for thirty years past he has been industriously collecting materials for vituperating the characters he had marked out for his hatred." Pickering had arraigned Jefferson partly for his actions, partly for his motives. His actions had been approved by a great majority of their fellow citizens, and Pickering's approbation was not to have been expected. "My motives he chooses to ascribe to hypocrisy, to ambition, and a passion for popularity. Of these the world must judge between us. It is no office of his or mine. To that tribunal I have ever submitted my actions and motives without ransacking the Union for certificates." But while leaving most of Pickering's libels to their fate he points out that one very elaborate statement, quoted from Dr. Stuart, to the effect that after the publication of the Mazzei letter Washington had called Jefferson to account "in a tone of unusual severity," and that in some

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fashion or other Jefferson had humbled himself to appease Washington's just resentment, was a pure fabrication, invented apparently by persons boiling with party passion who substituted fancies for facts. He mentions also, in connection with this 'unqualified falsehood,' that a paragraph interpolated into his Mazzei letter charging the United States with ingratitude and injustice to France had actually been treated as genuine not only in the ordinary Federalist pamphlets but even by John Marshall, who had thus invested a literary forgery with the dignity of history and 'the sanctity of the ermine.' In this letter Jefferson makes a small but not uninteresting contribution to our knowledge of Washington and Hamilton. He says that Washington did not much like the mimicry of royal forms and ceremonies, which were introduced when he assumed the Presidency at New York. After a time he asked his Cabinet ministers to consult on the matter. "We met at my office. Hamilton and myself agreed at once that there was too much ceremony for the character of our government." But as Randolph and Knox dissented, no change was made. Jefferson adds that his last parting with General Washington, at the Inauguration of Adams in March, 1797, was "warmly affectionate." Between that date and Washington's death only one session intervened; and though, having no occasion for correspondence, they did not correspond, "I never had any reason to believe any change on his part, as there certainly was none on mine." It was true that after the composition of his second and entirely Federal Cabinet Washington had been drawn away from the Republican party; but they had never weighed this aberration against his immeasurable merits, or allowed a thing so temporary to cloud the glories of a splendid life.



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In the autumn of 1824 La Fayette made a triumphal tour of the United States. He was treated as the Nation's guest, and Jefferson took advantage of the general enthusiasm to suggest that Congress should reward the hero's services to American Independence — a suggestion which was handsomely carried out. In October he received a letter from Jefferson. It was an invitation to Monticello: "What recollections, dear friend, will this call up to you and me! What a history have we to run over from the evening that yourself, Mousnier, Bernau, and other patriots settled in my house in Paris the outlines of the constitution you wished! And to trace through all the disastrous chapters of Robespierre, Barras, Bonaparte, and the Bourbons!" A few days later he told a correspondent that La Fayette in his progress from town to town was being welcomed with such acclamations as no crowned head had ever received. From Charlottesville a cavalcade of Virginian gentry, with trumpets and banners, escorted the hero up to Monticello. As the carriage drew up, Jefferson descended the steps of the portico, and the two veterans embraced with emotion. Jefferson Randolph, who witnessed the scene, tells us that his grandfather was feeble and tottering, while La Fayette (though ten years younger) was lame and broken in health by long confinement in the Austrian dungeon of Olmütz. The University had not yet been opened; but Jefferson was present with Madison and President Monroe at a dinner given to La Fayette in Charlottesville, and replied to a toast of his own health in a graceful speech which was read for him by a friend. In this he mentioned that La Fayette had been his most powerful auxiliary and advocate, when as American minister in Paris he was endeavouring to advance the mutual

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interests of France and the United States. La Fayette's influence and connections in Paris were great. "All doors of all departments were open to him at all times; to me only formally and at appointed times. In truth I only held the nail, he drove it. Honour him then as your benefactor in peace as well as in war."

At the beginning of December, George Ticknor and his wife, accompanied by Daniel Webster, made their way from Washington to Madison's home, Montpelier, on the western side of what are called the South West mountains. They were entertained by their host with excellent wines and an endless series of capital stories. Madison of course had not the Harvard culture nor the Federal finish. But the Bostonian was pleased to observe: "both Mr. Webster and myself were struck with a degree of good sense in his conversation which we had not anticipated from his school of politics and course of life." Driving thence to Monticello they found everything on a larger scale, but nothing, said Ticknor, to mark the residence of an ex-king. The party consisted of Jefferson, his daughter, Mrs. Randolph, Trist, a young Louisianian, who had married one of Jefferson's granddaughters, several other grandchildren, a young lawyer, and George Long, the Cambridge scholar, who had just arrived to take up a classical professorship in the University of Virginia. Jefferson, wrote Ticknor, "is now eighty-two years of age, very little altered from what he was ten years ago, very active, lively, and happy, riding from ten to fifteen miles every day, and talking without the least restraint very pleasantly upon all subjects. In politics his interest seems nearly gone. He takes no newspaper but the *Richmond Enquirer*, and reads that reluctantly; but on all matters of literature, philosophy, and general interest he

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is prompt and even eager. He reads much Greek and Saxon. I saw his Greek Lexicon, printed in 1817; it was much worn with use and contained many curious notes. . . . Mr. Jefferson seems to enjoy life highly and very rationally; but he said well of himself the other evening, 'When I can neither read nor ride I shall desire very much to make my bow.' I think he bids fair to enjoy both yet nine or ten years." Daniel Webster has also left notes of his visit, but there is ample testimony that his account of Jefferson's appearance and conversations, though carefully studied, and coloured with the skill of a professional rhetorician, is too inaccurate to be worth repeating or correcting. It served however one good purpose; for Ellen Coolidge, after reading Webster's description of her grandfather, wrote at Randall's request her own recollections "of the appearance of one whom I so tenderly loved and deeply venerated."

"His person and countenance were to me associated with so many of my best affections, so much of my highest reverence, that I could not expect other persons to see them as I did. One thing I will say — that never in my life did I see his countenance distorted by a single bad passion or unworthy feeling. . . . It was impossible to look on his face without being struck with its benevolent, intelligent, cheerful, and placid expression. It was at once intellectual, good, kind, and pleasant, while his tall spare figure spoke of health, activity, and that helpfulness, that power and will never to trouble another for what he could do for himself, which marked his character.

"His dress was simple, and adapted to his ideas of neatness and comfort. He paid little attention to fashion, wearing whatever he liked best, and sometimes blending the fashions of several different periods. He wore long waistcoats, when the mode was for very short, white cambric stocks fastened behind with a buckle, when cravats were universal. He adopted the pantaloons very late in life, because he found it more comfortable and convenient, and cut off his queue for the same reason. He made no change except from motives of the same

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kind, and did nothing to be in conformity with the fashion of the day. He considered such independence was the privilege of his age."

George Long, a good scholar,<sup>1</sup> was much liked by Jefferson, who noted, December 22, "Mr. Long, professor of Ancient Languages, is located in his apartments at the University. He drew by lot Pavilion No. 5. He appears to be a most amiable man, of fine understanding, well qualified for his department, and acquiring esteem as fast as he becomes known." The other professors from England were expected almost daily to land at Norfolk; but their ship was delayed by bad weather. Jefferson was "dreadfully nonplussed" by their non-arrival, as the opening of the University had been announced for February 1, and "to open an University without mathematics and without natural philosophy must bring on us ridicule and disgrace." However on February 20 all the five European professors had arrived, and the Rector was able to announce the opening of the University for March 7. It was one of the proudest moments in his life, comparable in his own estimate of personal achievement with the writing of the Declaration of Independence and of the Statute establishing Freedom of Religion in his native state.

While he was waiting thus impatiently for his professors Jefferson had been reading, as he told Adams, "the most extraordinary of all books" — Flourens's experiments on the Functions of the Nervous System in vertebrated animals. Flourens, he thought, had gone far to

<sup>1</sup> In 1877, two years before his death, he published a translation of Jefferson's favourite work of moral philosophy, *The Discourses of Epictetus*. Is it fanciful to suppose that this task was suggested to him by the discourses of Jefferson with whom he and the other professors dined regularly three times a week until Jefferson's last illness?

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destroy the psychology of spiritualism and to establish the psychology of materialism : —

“Cabanis had proved by the anatomical structure of certain portions of the human frame that they might be capable of receiving from the hand of the creator the faculty of thinking; Flourens proves that they have received it; that the cerebrum is the thinking organ; and that life and health may continue, and the animal be entirely without thought if deprived of that organ.”

Upon these facts he puts a conundrum to Adams: after the cerebrum has been removed and the body deprived of thought but not of life, what happens to the soul? Does it remain in the body until death? On the same day, January 8, on which he addressed these speculations to John Adams, he wrote a longer letter to his friend William Short concerning one Harper, a Federalist, who, exaggerating his intimacy with Alexander Hamilton, had sought to prove that Hamilton and other leading Federalists had no theoretical preference for monarchy above other forms of government. After referring to the oft-quoted discussion at his own table between Adams and Hamilton on the subject, Jefferson went on : —

“Can anyone read Mr. Adams’s Defence of the American constitutions without seeing that he was a monarchist? And J. Q. Adams, the son, was more explicit than the father in his answer to Paine’s Rights of Man. So much for the leaders. Their followers were divided. Some went the same lengths; others, and I believe the greater part, only wished a stronger Executive.” At New York, when the Federal government was established, monarchical sentiments prevailed at all the dinner parties. “The furthest that any one would go in support of the republican features of our new government would be to say ‘the present constitution is well as a beginning and may be allowed a fair trial, but it is in fact only a stepping stone to something better.’ Among their writers Dennie, the editor of the Portfolio, who was a kind of oracle with them, and called the Addison of America, openly avowed his preference of monarchy over all other forms of government, prided

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himself on the avowal, and maintained it by argument and without reserve in his publications. I do not myself know that the Essex Junto of Boston were monarchists, but I have always heard it so said, and never doubted it."

Now, to be sure, monarchy was defeated, and American Tories wished it to be forgotten that they had ever favoured it. Their 'new ground' was to consolidate and enlarge the functions of the central government by unlimited constructions of the constitution, in order to concentrate all power ultimately at Washington. ii

During the spring of 1825, writes his first biographer, George Tucker — who had been appointed professor of Moral Philosophy at Charlottesville — Jefferson seemed to regain his youth in getting the University into operation. "Everything was looked into, everything was ordered by him. He suggested the remedy for every difficulty, and made the selection in every choice of expedients. Two or three times a week he rode down to the establishment to give orders to the Proctor, and to watch the progress of the work still unfinished." His cheerfulness and vigour were the more remarkable that he was sorely oppressed by financial troubles. In endeavouring to save a friend from the crash of 1819 he became involved in a heavy liability, which forced him to think of selling his property; but the value of agricultural land had fallen enormously in all the neighbourhood, owing partly to the protection of manufacturers at the expense of farmers, partly to the rush of pioneers into the virgin lands of the west. But, as we learn from Tucker, his old habits of hospitality were not relinquished. "His invitations to the professors and their families were frequent, and every Sunday some four or five of the students dined with him. At these times he generally ate by himself in a small re-

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cess connected with the dining room ; but saving at meals sat and conversed with the company as usual." The University was frequented by visitors, who seldom failed to call at Monticello, "where they often passed the day, and sometimes several days." In the duties of Rector Jefferson forgot his cares and anxieties. His sun was setting in a soft and mellow radiance. He preserved to the end what his overseer Bacon called 'the Jefferson temper' — all music and sunshine. In one of his happiest moods he addressed words of good counsel to a young namesake, with six precepts or commandments and ten canons after the fashion of Polonius's advice to Laertes. The six precepts would have astonished those New England pulpits which had thundered so often against Jeffersonian infidelity. They ran: "1. Adore God. 2. Reverence and cherish your parents. 3. Love your neighbour as yourself, your country more than yourself. 4. Be just. 5. Be true. 6. Murmur not at the ways of Providence." Among the maxims of prudence two may be quoted — 'We never repent of having eaten too little,' and 'Take things by the smooth handle.' He also wrote out for the boy "the portrait of a good man, by the most sublime of poets." It was Tate and Brady's rendering of the Fifteenth Psalm, "Who is the Happy Man?"

'Tis he whose every thought and deed by rules of virtue moves ;  
Whose generous tongue disdains to speak the thing his heart disproves.  
Who never did a slander forge, his neighbour's fame to wound ;  
Nor hearken to a false report, by malice whisper'd round.  
Who vice in all its pomp and power, can treat with just neglect ;  
And piety, though clothed in rags, religiously respect.  
Who to his plighted vows and trust has ever firmly stood ;  
And though he promise to his loss, he makes his promise good.  
Whose soul in usury disdains his treasure to employ ;  
Whom no rewards can ever bribe the guiltless to destroy.

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The man, who, by this steady course, has happiness insur'd,  
When earth's foundations shake, shall stand, by Providence secur'd.

In the summer of 1825 his health began to give way, and when La Fayette, before leaving the States, came to Monticello to say good-bye, he found his friend on a couch suffering much pain. La Fayette conferred with Jefferson's physician, and on returning to Paris sent a supply of drugs "which would have been sufficient for twenty patients."<sup>1</sup> On this occasion the University gave a public dinner to La Fayette; but Jefferson was too ill to be present." In the autumn, when he got better for a while, he was much upset by some disorders among the students. They were called together, and the Rector addressed them. The offenders confessed; some were expelled, and discipline was restored.

At the Presidential elections Jefferson preferred J. Q. Adams to Andrew Jackson; but when the President's message appeared in December, 1825, he was so alarmed at the progress of centralisation that he wrote to Madison, and actually drafted for his consideration a "solemn Declaration and Protest" which he thought they might get adopted by the Legislature of Virginia. This document recited the compact between the States and the Federal government, and declared that in claiming and exercising the right to construct roads, canals, etc., the Federal government was usurping powers belonging to the States. If the States wished internal improvements to be effected by the Federal government, the General Assembly of Virginia would consent that the constitution should be amended for that purpose.

Among other visitors to the University and Monticello in 1825 were some young English aristocrats and politicians, including Stanley, afterwards Lord Derby, and



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John Evelyn Denison, who was to become Speaker of the House of Commons. On returning home Denison sent a present of books to the University and a letter, in which he informed Jefferson that the study of Anglo-Saxon was reviving in England. Replying on November 9, 1825, Jefferson indulged in a disquisition on the subject, which shows with what ardour he had kept up this favourite hobby, and how keenly he had enjoyed Denison's visit. He maintains that Anglo-Saxon is merely an early dialect of English — the earliest we happen to possess of the many shades of mutation by which the language has tapered down to its modern form. The grammar had changed very little, and he regretted that Anglo-Saxon scholars had tried to give this first dialect of English too learned a form, by mounting it on all the scaffolding of Greek and Latin and loading it with declensions, conjugations, etc. Strip it of its English black letter, reform its uncouth orthography, and assimilate it to modern English, as we do Piers Plowman or Chaucer, and then after regaining a few lost words we understand it as we do them. By way of example Jefferson gives in his own orthography the Anglo-Saxon of the Lord's Prayer to show how near it is to modern English. His version begins: — "Father our, thou tha art in heavenum, si thine name y-hallowed." He observes that there is but a single word — 'temptation' — in our version of the prayer which is not Anglo-Saxon. The word 'trespasses' from the French might as well have been translated by the Anglo-Saxon 'guilts.' By simplifying Anglo-Saxon he hoped to encourage its study. Besides, as he reminds Denison, their Anglo-Saxon ancestors had no fixed orthography. "To produce a given sound everyone jumbled the letters together according to his unlettered notion of their power; and all jumbled them dif-

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ferently, just as would be done at this day were a dozen peasants, who have learned the alphabet but have never read, desired to write the Lord's Prayer." Hence the varied modes of spelling by which the Anglo-Saxons tried to express the same sound. "The word *many*, for example, was spelled in twenty different ways; yet we cannot suppose that they were twenty different words, or that they had twenty different ways of pronouncing the same word. . . . We must drop in pronunciation the superfluous consonants and give to the remaining letters their present English sound," which was as likely to be right as any other. Jefferson's scientific zeal for philology, and a true feeling for the wealth and resources of the English language, appear in another paragraph of this remarkable letter:—

"It is much to be wished that the publication of the present County dialects of England should go on. It will restore to us our language in all its shades of variation. It will incorporate into the present one all the riches of our ancient dialects; and what a store this will be may be seen by running the eye over the county glossaries, and observing the words we have lost by abandonment and disuse, which in sound and sense are inferior to nothing we have retained. When these local vocabularies are published and digested together into a single one, it is probable we shall find that there is not a word in Shakespeare which is not now in use in some of the counties in England, from whence we may obtain its true sense. . . . It is not that I am merely an enthusiast for palaeology. I set equal value on the beautiful engraftments we have borrowed from Greece and Rome; and I am equally a friend to the encouragement of a judicious neology. A language cannot be too rich."

His hope of a dialect dictionary has since been realised. So too has his demand for a dictionary showing the derivation of English words from their Saxon roots. He also wanted "an elaborate history of the English language." A

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time would come when American scholars would be able to co-operate with their English brethren, but as yet literature was not a distinct profession in the young society of the New World, whose first object was bread and covering, science being "secondary and subsequent."

A week or two later the philologist had turned mechanic. For the benefit of an American correspondent who was investigating dry docks, Jefferson described, and sketched, a model lock dock which he had had made for exhibition during his presidency at Washington.

In the closing months of his life Jefferson's letters show no sign of enfeebled faculties. His reasoning is as masculine, his vocabulary as copious, his metaphors as bold as ever. One of the last books he read was a life of Richard Henry Lee by his grandson. Here is Jefferson's comment to an old friend: "Eloquent, bold, and ever watchful at his post, of which his biographer omits no proof, I am not certain whether the friends of George Mason, of Patrick Henry, yourself, and even of General Washington, may not reclaim some feathers of the plumage given him, noble as was his proper and original coat." There is enough in these few words to give life and colour to a whole review. Then we have a letter to Giles in which the veteran is roused to indignation by the new economics. The protectionists, he cries, called it 'regulation of commerce' to take the earnings of depressed agriculture and put them into the pockets of flourishing manufacturers, while the "moneyed incorporations . . . under the guise and cloak of their favoured branches of manufactures, commerce, and navigation, were riding and ruling over the plundered plowmen and beggared yeomanry." But what hurt him almost more was that "we were obliged the last year to receive shameful Latinists into the classical

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school of the University, such as we will certainly refuse as soon as we can get from better schools a sufficiency of those properly instructed to form a class. We must get rid of this Connecticut Latin, of this barbarous confusion of long and short syllables, which renders doubtful whether we are listening to a reader of Cherokee, Shawnee, Iroquois, or what."

Though he complained of habitual ill health, yet on February 17, 1826, "seeing the overwhelming vote of the House of Representatives against giving us another dollar," so he wrote to Madison, "I rode to the University and desired Mr. B. to engage in nothing new, to stop everything on hand which could be done without, and to employ all his force and funds in finishing the circular room for the books and the anatomical theatre." Jefferson's principles of toleration deserted him when he thought of the Law professorship, and of Chief Justice Marshall in the background at Richmond. In the selection of our law professor, he said, "we must be rigorously attentive to his political principles." Before the Revolution, Coke on Littleton was the universal elementary book of Law students, "and a sounder Whig never wrote, nor of profounder learning in the orthodox doctrines of the British constitution. . . . You remember also that our lawyers were then all Whigs. But when his black letter text and uncouth but cunning learning got out of fashion, and the honeyed Mansfieldism of Blackstone became the students' hornbook, from that moment that profession (the nursery of our Congress) began to slide into toryism, and nearly all the young brood of lawyers now are of that hue." It was in *their* seminary that the vestal flame must be kept alive to spread anew over Virginia and the sister states. This letter to his old friend ends very sadly on his

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financial misfortunes. He had made an application to the Legislature of Virginia for power to dispose of some of his lands by way of lottery; if that were refused, he would have to sell Monticello and move to Bedford "where I have not even a log hut to put my head into." He begs Madison to look after the University when he is gone, and not to abandon the task of vindicating to posterity the political course they had pursued together during their half century of friendship. To myself, he concludes, you have been a pillar of support through life. "Take care of me when dead, and be assured that I shall leave with you my last affections."

At the end of March he answered a letter from President J. Q. Adams, who had sent him a copy of his Message and some documents about maritime law. Jefferson describes the efforts which he had made with Franklin and John Adams to establish freedom of the seas after the achievement of independence. A month later the Rector bestirred himself about a school of botany for the University, and wrote to Dr. John Emmett, the Professor of Natural History, instructing him to select a site of six acres for a botanical garden. "I have diligently examined all our grounds with this view and think that that on the public road, at the upper corner of our possessions where the stream issues from them, has more of the requisite qualities than any other spot we possess." . . . He desires the ground to be enclosed with a serpentine brick wall, seven feet high. Serpentine walls were a device of Jefferson's to save bricks; he calculated that this wall would take 80,000 bricks and would cost \$800.

|| The Legislature of Virginia granted Jefferson permission to dispose of his farms by lottery; but when the news went abroad that the author of the Declaration of In-

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dependence, the most famous republican statesman of his time, was likely to be driven by debt and distress from hospitable Monticello, a movement sprang up for his relief. New York raised \$8,500, Philadelphia \$5,000, and Baltimore \$3,000. The lottery was suspended. Jefferson was not only grateful, but proud of his countrymen's liberality. "No cent of this," he cried, "is wrung from the taxpayer. It is a pure and unsolicited offering of love."

As June wore on life began to ebb. Preparations were in hand all over the states to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of American independence. An invitation came to him to attend the function at Washington on the fourth of July. His last, or nearly his last, letter in reply is not unworthy of the author and the occasion.

TO MR. WEIGHTMAN

Monticello, June 24, 1826.

Respected Sir:

The kind invitation I received from you on the part of the citizens of the city of Washington to be present with them at their celebration on the fiftieth anniversary of American Independence, as one of the surviving signers of an instrument pregnant with our own, and the fate of the world, is most flattering to myself, and heightened by the honourable accompaniment proposed for the comfort of such a journey. It adds sensibly to the sufferings of sickness, to be deprived by it of a personal participation in the rejoicings of that day. But acquiescence is a duty, under circumstances not placed among those we are permitted to control. I should, indeed, with peculiar delight, have met and exchanged there congratulations personally with the small band, the remnant of that host of worthies, who joined with us on that day, in the bold and doubtful election we were to make for our country, between submission or the sword; and to have enjoyed with them the consolatory fact, that our fellow citizens, after half a century of experience and prosperity, continue to approve the choice we made. May it be to the world, what I believe it will be, (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all,) the signal of arousing men to burst the chains under

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which monkish ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of self-government. That form which we have substituted, restores the free right to the unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion. All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favoured few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others. \*For ourselves, let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these rights, and an undiminished devotion to them.

I will ask permission here to express the pleasure with which I should have met my ancient neighbours of the city of Washington and its vicinities, with whom I passed so many years of a pleasing social intercourse; an intercourse which so much relieved the anxieties of the public cares, and left impressions so deeply engraved in my affections, as never to be forgotten. With my regret that ill health forbids me the gratification of an acceptance, be pleased to receive for yourself, and those for whom you write, the assurance of my highest respect and friendly attachments.

TH. JEFFERSON.

On the same day Jefferson sent for Dr. Dunglison. Both patient and physician agreed that the end was near. A Philadelphia friend had entreated Jefferson to send for the celebrated Dr. Physic of that city; but Jefferson refused saying, "I have got a Dr. Physic of my own — I have entire confidence in Dr. Dunglison." He would not have any other medical man called in. The good doctor stayed at Monticello, and some of his notes have been preserved. Until the second of July, though his strength was diminishing, Jefferson's mind remained clear; after that he was affected with stupor. In one of his last wakeful intervals, at seven o'clock on the evening of July 3, he asked the doctor: 'Is it the Fourth?' and received the reply, 'It soon will be.' That same night Nicholas Trist, who had married one of the granddaughters, was sitting beside the bed when

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Jefferson whispered inquiringly: 'This is the Fourth?' It was still an hour from midnight, but Trist rather than disappoint him nodded assent. "Ah," he murmured, as an expression came over his countenance which said, "Just as I wished."

His favourite grandson, Thomas Jefferson Randolph, who watched by the bedside, has given us the best account of these last days. Jefferson showed the utmost consideration for all. His daughter was with him during the day; but he would not permit her to sit up at night. He suffered no pain, and until the last few days conversed freely and gave directions as to his private affairs. "His manner was that of a person going on a necessary journey, evincing neither satisfaction nor regret." His mind kept recurring to the scenes of the Revolution. He remarked that the curtains of his bed had been purchased from the first cargo that arrived after the peace of 1782. On the last night he sat up in his sleep, and went through the forms of writing; spoke of the Committee of Safety, saying it ought to be warned. At four A.M. he was conscious, and again at eleven, but after mid-day on July 4, at about ten minutes to one, he ceased to breathe and Thomas Jefferson Randolph closed his eyes. By a coincidence which has struck the imagination of their countrymen, John Adams also passed away at sunset on that same Fourth of July, the Fiftieth Anniversary of Independence. His last recorded words were: "Thomas Jefferson still lives." //

A few days before his death, when young Randolph expressed a hope that he was somewhat better, Jefferson said, "Do not imagine for a moment that I feel the smallest solicitude about the result; I am like an old watch, with a pinion worn out here and a wheel there, until it can go



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no longer." On hearing someone mention the name of the minister whose church he attended he remarked, "I have no objection to see him as a kind and good neighbour." His parting with the members of his family was calm and composed. He spoke constantly with deep affection and admiration of Madison. Their friendship had indeed been extraordinary — they were born, they lived, and they died within twenty-five miles of one another. There is a touching note from Madison to Trist written two days after Jefferson's death from Montpelier :

"We are more than consoled for the loss by the gain to him, and by the assurance that he lives and will live in the memory and gratitude of the wise and good as a luminary of science, as a votary of liberty, as a model of patriotism, and as a benefactor of the human kind. In these characters I have known him, and not less in the virtues and charms of social life, for a period of fifty years, during which there was not an interruption or a diminution of mutual confidence and cordial friendship for a single moment in a single instance."<sup>1</sup>

Speaking on his deathbed of the many bitter calumnies which political and religious enemies had uttered against his public and private character, Jefferson said he had not considered them as abusing him, whom they had never known. They had created an imaginary being, clothed it with odious attributes, to whom they had given the name of Thomas Jefferson; and it was against this creature of the imagination that their anathemas had been levelled.

It is clear from Jefferson's will that he believed his property would be adequate to pay off all debts and to leave a sufficiency for his beloved daughter, Martha Randolph, and her family; though he recognised that her husband, Thomas Mann Randolph, was insolvent. He commended

<sup>1</sup> Their friendship really commenced when Jefferson, being twenty-three years old, was consulted on a course of study for Madison, then a boy of fifteen.

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the care of his sister, Anne Scott, to his daughter, left his gold-mounted walking staff to Madison, and a gold watch to each of his grandchildren. He left his remaining books partly to the University of Virginia, partly to his grandsons in law, Nicholas P. Trist and Joseph Coolidge. He emancipated several of his negro slaves, and left them means to practice their trades and callings.

In her *Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson* Sarah Randolph alludes to the constant and peculiar devotion of Thomas Jefferson Randolph to his grandfather:—

“When he took charge of his grandfather’s affairs young Randolph threw himself into the breach, and, from that time until Mr. Jefferson’s death, made it the aim of his life as far as possible to alleviate his financial condition, and to this end devoted all the energy and ardor of his youth as well as his own private fortune. I have lying before me an account signed by Mr. Jefferson a few weeks before his death, which shows that his grandson had interposed himself between him and his creditors to the amount of \$58,536. Another paper before me, signed by Mr. Jefferson’s commission merchant, shows that he, the commission merchant, was guaranteed by Mr. Randolph against any loss from endorsation, over-draught, or other responsibility which he had incurred, or might incur, on his grandfather’s account; that these responsibilities were all met by him, and that nevertheless, by his directions, Mr. Jefferson’s crops were placed in the hands of the commission merchant on Mr. Jefferson’s account, and were drawn out solely to his order. When, at the winding up of Mr. Jefferson’s estate after his death, it was found that his debts exceeded the value of his property by \$40,000, this same grandson pledged himself to make good the deficit, which, by his untiring and unaided efforts, he succeeded in doing in the course of some years, having in that time paid all that was due to Jefferson’s creditors.”

To this favourite grandson, the worthy scion of a noble stock, we are indebted for a portrait of his grandfather which bears all the marks of nature and truth: “Mr. Jefferson’s stature was commanding—six feet two and a

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half inches in height, well formed, indicating strength, activity, and robust health, his carriage erect; step firm and elastic, which he preserved to his death; his temper, naturally strong, under perfect control; his courage cool and impassive. No one ever knew him exhibit trepidation. His moral courage of the highest order — his will firm and inflexible. It was remarked of him that he never abandoned a plan, principle, or a friend." Riding on horseback was his favourite recreation, and he went on with it until three weeks from his death. Even in his last year he would not allow a servant to accompany him; for, as he said, he liked to ride and muse alone. On horseback he was bold and fearless. From his easy and confident seat men saw at a glance that he was master of his steed, usually the finest blood-horse of Virginia, which he subdued to his will on the slightest sign of restiveness. His habits, we are told, were regular and systematic. A miser of his time, he rose always at dawn, wrote and read until breakfast, breakfasted early, dined from three to four, retired at nine, and went to bed between ten and eleven. He said during his last illness that the sun had not caught him in bed for fifty years. He always made his own fire, carrying out his favourite maxim, 'Never trouble another to do what you can do for yourself.' His manners, wrote his grandson, were of the polished school of the Colonial government, — courteous and considerate to all, never violating any of those minor conventional observances which constitute the well-bred gentleman. When Randolph as a lad was riding out with Jefferson they met a negro who bowed. Jefferson returned the bow. Randolph did not. "Turning to me he asked: Do you permit a negro to be more of a gentleman than yourself?" Once during his presidency he was returning on horseback from

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Charlottesville with a company of friends whom he had invited to dinner. Most of them were ahead of him. When Jefferson reached a stream over which there was no bridge, a man standing there asked to be taken up behind and carried over. After they had crossed Jefferson's companion asked the man why he had allowed the other horsemen to go by without asking them for this favour. He replied: "From their looks I did not like to ask them. The old gentleman looked as if he would do it and I asked him." He was much surprised to learn that he had ridden behind the President of the United States.

There is a note in Tucker's biography setting forth the descendants of Jefferson who were living at the time of his death. They consisted of his daughter, Martha Wayles Randolph, eleven grandchildren and fourteen great grandchildren. Thomas Jefferson Randolph, the eldest of his grandchildren, had at that time six children; another grandchild was Ellen Coolidge who had married Joseph Coolidge of Boston; a third, Virginia Trist, had married Nicholas P. Trist, an intimate friend of Andrew Jackson. Trist's memoranda abound in recollections of Jefferson's table talk and of Madison's conversations.

Two days before his death Jefferson told his daughter that in a certain drawer she would find something intended for her. She found a few touching verses composed by himself and entitled A Death-bed Adieu from Th. J. to M. R. Among his papers were found written on the torn back of an old letter directions for his grave: —

<sup>11</sup>"Could the dead feel any interest in monuments or other remembrances of them when, as Anacreon says,

*Ὀλίγη δὲ κεισόμεθα  
Κόινς ὁστέων λυθόντων*

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the following would be to my manes the most gratifying: on the grave a plain die or cube of three feet without any mouldings surmounted by an obelisk of six feet height, each of a single stone; on the faces of the obelisk the following inscriptions and not a word more:

Here was buried  
Thomas Jefferson,  
Author of the Declaration of American Independence,  
Of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom,  
And Father of the University of Virginia;  
because by these as testimonials that I have lived I wish most to be remembered."

The obelisk, he added, was "to be of the coarse stone of which my columns are made, that no one might be tempted hereafter to destroy it for the value of the materials." His bust by Cerrachi "might be given to the University, if they would place it in the dome room of the Rotunda." Jefferson was buried in the graveyard of Monticello between his wife and his daughter Maria Eppes. Near by was afterwards laid his eldest daughter Martha. The graves were easily seen through a high iron grating, that there might be no excuse for forcing open the gates which closed the entrance to the graveyard. But the gates were broken open again and again by the vulgar curiosity of the unconscionable sight-seeker. In 1871, when Sarah Randolph wrote, the granite obelisk had been chipped away until it stood a misshapen column. A replica has since been erected in its place, and ere long Monticello, which was ruthlessly sold up and alienated from the family a few months after Jefferson's death to satisfy his debts, will be reclaimed for the nation and tastefully restored as a Memorial of its greatest republican and democratic statesman.

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